THE CROSBY VOICE

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THE VICTORIAN BING CROSBY SOCIETY

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KEN ORREN - IN MEMORIUM
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In late June, the Victorian Bing Crosby Society lost one of its longest serving and hardest working members, Ken Orren.

I first met Ken back in 1977, the year that the Society was founded. Ken was one of the first to come forward and offer his services to help a total stranger, yours truly, get what was intended only to be a small regional group off the ground. Ken not only helped get us off the ground, he helped lift us to become an international organisation with members around the world.

Ken was our Vice President, or President of Vice as he liked to refer to himself, from the very start. Although this position in any organisation is often a non-job, Ken was one of the busiest non-job holders that I've ever known.

His good humour and support were in evidence whenever we got together, as a committee or as a group as we at our regular get-togethers. I'm sure that you'll all remember Ken, he was here at every meeting, either sitting at my side by the door, helping in the kitchen or working to make both new and old members feel welcome.

Ken had been sick for some time, and even though his condition had been deteriorating steadily for the past year, his enthusiasm and contribution to the club never slackened for a moment.

Our sympathies go out to his widow Betty, and his children Judith, Phillip and John.

Ken will be very sadly missed. He was a very fine man and a very fine member of the Victorian Bing Crosby Society. I feel proud and privileged to have known him.

Bob Machliss

MOUNTAIN VIEWS, Monday, June 26, 1989

Obituary

Mr Kenneth Orren

Healesville has lost a fine citizen and good friend with the death of Ken Orren last week, at the age of 61.

Ken was born in Richmond and grew up there. He started with A.E. Smith & Son (air conditioning) 47 years ago — and he never left the company. Even when he became ill two years ago, Ken did not want to retire. Instead, he chose to take sick leave.

Ken and Betty shared a liking for entertaining . both had good singing voices. They met when they found themselves in the same concert party, in 1956. The group used to travel round to the Seamen's Mission, Heidelberg Repatriation Hospital — even to Pentridge prison — giving free concerts.

They were married in 1957, at St Barnabas Church in Balwyn

For 20 years the Orrens lived in Cheltenham and all three children were born there: Judith Phillip and John

They came to Healesville nearly 12 years ago and have worked hard for the community ever since

Betty liked to have a game of Bingo at the Healesville Lions Club hall where she met Dave and Mavis Symon They in turn met Ken and encouraged him to join the Lions Club

If you have ever bought a lucky envelope from the Lions, in Healesville's main street, you almost certainly met Ken and Betty who (along with the McVeas, Rooneys etc) were the mainstays of that fund-raising effort

Because of his involvement with Lions, Ken was inextricably linked with all the fine works done by that service club Carols by candlelight, State Orchestra visits, Yarra Marra canoe marathon the Shire s mardi gras and Yarra Valley Broadcasters

Ken was an intelligent man, a man with a good sense of humour and (as we saw a few years ago when Eddie Charlton gave a snooker exhibition in Healesville) Ken Orren was the man the Lions Club turned to, at the last minute, when their compere was ill Ken showed what a trouper he was and did a very professional, polished and witty job

His love of entertainers centred on one singer Bing Crosby, and Ken was an avid fan and member of the Victorian Bing Crosby Society for years Right up until the last months of his life he was still collecting Crosby recordings.

Ken learned that he had leukemia two years ago. He fought a brave fight but, despite his courage and cheerfulness, that rotten disease caught up with him and he died, in Healesville Hospital, on Monday, June 19.

His funeral was conducted, last Thursday by Pastor John Meadth at the Life Ministry Centre, in Chirnside Park. Mountain Views sends sincere sympathy to Betty and her family

Hello again,

We have taken the radical step of delaying our regular introduction in order to first pay tribute to our late Vice President, Ken Orren. Ken deserved nothing less.

Sadly, from the other side of the world comes news of the passing of another leading Crosby figure, Frank Murphy of the U.K. You can read Keith Parkinson's tribute to Frank on pages 14 and 15.

The Victorian Bing Crosby Society will shortly be celebrating it's twelfth birthday which makes it one of the younger Crosby Societies in world terms. However, we do like to think of ourselves as one of the more active groups - which in fact is our reason for being. This magazine that you hold evolved out of simple newsletter on future functions, and whilst it has grown into a massive tome (68 pages this issue), particularly to serve members in other states and other countries, we enjoy putting it together.

However, in the last year or two, although our overseas membership is booming, thanks to the efforts of Keith Parkinson and Mark Scrimger, our Victorian membership is showing signs of decline. This can probably be put down to several factors. Many of Bing's fans are not as young as they used to be (who is?) and the cost of belonging is undoubtedly a strain on finances, to say nothing of the effort required to get into the city for our regular meetings. Further, yours truly simply does not have the time to publicise the group as he once did. And finally, as Bing becomes more and more a part of history, it could be that belonging to a group devoted to his memory may feel a little 'strange' to some people.

However, there are still obviously a lot of Crosby admirers out there. Someone has to be buying all those records in the shops, and certainly, in terms of accessibility of rare Crosby material, there has never been a better time to be a collector.

Therefore, I would like to use this page this issue to announce our first ever membership drive. Of course we welcome new members from everywhere else - the more the better, but what we specifically want are more people from the Melbourne area. As we said above, our regular meetings are the club's reason for being, and if they cannot be well supported (if nothing more than to cover all the costs involved), then we may have to take a long, hard look at the group's future.

What we want you to do is encourage your friends who like Bing to join up. We'll gladly supply all the ammunition you need - past issues of this magazine, cassette library details, membership forms, etc. We'll make the deadline December 31st this year, and, as an incentive, will give the member bringing in the most new members the three Crosby CDs, LPs (if available) or cassettes of their choice. (By the way, any suggestions as to how we can improve our meetings will be gratefully received.)

I see that I've left myself no room to talk about the highlights of this issue but that's no loss. Thanks to all members who supplied magazine and newspaper clippings and articles. Believe me, they're most appreciated.

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FUTURE FUNCTIONS

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MONDAY, OCTOBER 23RD - RIDING HIGH

Generally, we've avoided showing Bing's later movies because they tended to show up on TV reasonably often. However, as it seems to have been some time since 'Riding High' was on the box, we'll chance it and slot it in for our October screening.

As a companion piece, we have a video piece from 1981 - the American Film Institute's Lifetime Award to Fred Astaire. This fascinating programme features a number of guest artists, many now sadly departed including Eleanor Powell, James Cagney and David Niven (the host). You'll see many of the great Astaire dance routines and some that may not be so familiar including one, in colour, from a 1959 TV special.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 11TH - DIXIE

We'd originally slated this production for the start of the year. However, the ratfinks at one of the TV stations beat us to the punch. However, as almost 12 months have elapsed and we have a sparkling colour film print of the movie, we thought that it would make a nice end of year feature.

First half of the programme will be a series of short films from the thirties and forties featuring a range of artists. We're not sure which these will be at the moment, but we know that you'll see a lot of your old favourites there.

Venue, as always, is the theatrette of the AMP Building, Corner Bourke and Williams Streets in the city.

Starting time for both functions is 7.30 sharp.

Members: $5 Pensioners and students: $3 Non-members: $6

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BING AT ODDMAN'S

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by
VERNON
WESLEY
TAYLOR

(A dialogue)

"Manager"

"Taylor"

The other day, your correspondent went downtown for a little shopping and a little business. He turned in some films at his favourite camera-store and before he left, picked up the following vignette about Bing Crosby.

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CAMERA STORE MANAGER: Hi! Whatya got today? More pictures of Bing for something else you're writing about him?

VERNON WESLEY TAYLOR: This one is about his race-horses. Remember how they used to kid him about them on radio?

MANAGER: Yeah. Say those were the good old days. Radio and all those jokes. Did Bing ever have a nag that actually won a race, do you suppose? I bet he did.

TAYLOR: Of course he did. Those were just stage-gags.

MANAGER: Yeah. Say, that makes me remember something. I'll bet I can tell you a story about old Bing that you never heard of; a really true story. I know it is because I was in it, sort of.

TAYLOR: You saw him in person and got his autograph?

MANAGER: Naw, nothing like that. I'm no collector or anything like that. I was just a fan of his. It was when I was up in Seattle.

TAYLOR: You were walking down the street and you saw him?

MANAGER: No, no. It was at Oddman's and that bandleader, Phil Harris, was with him. Do you remember Oddman's Bar & Grill?

TAYLOR: The restaurant on Denny Way?

MANAGER: Right. Well this happened around the middle 1950s. It was a warm day, so the fella I was with and I went in for a soft drink.

It was real noisy and the bartender apologised. Most of the noise was coming from a booth in the back. He told us that Crosby and Harris had blown into town and were having themselves a drink before checking themselves into Shidel's.

TAYLOR: Shidel's? The drug treatment hospital?

MANAGER: Yeah. Of course it was called an alcoholic centre at that time. The barman told us our money was no good because Bing was standing everybody that walked in the door because he and Mr Harris had appointments at the hospital in just a little while and wanted lots of company for his last drink on earth. By the time we'd got there, they had been at it for over an hour.

TAYLOR: Are you kidding me? Isn't this just a little joke?

MANAGER: Not at all, not at all! Why would I lie?

TAYLOR: Well...I don't mean that you would lie...
So you had a free bottle of pop on Bing Crosby?

MANAGER: Oh no, I ordered my usual, even though it was early. I mean, after all, that would have been an insult, wouldn't it? After a minute, we took our glasses and went back to see what was going on. Sure enough, there was Bing Crosby on one side and Phil Harris on the other, across from him in this big high-backed booth. They had a little crowd of people clustered all around them and they were kind of holding court. At first it sounded like they were all trying to talk at the same time. Mostly they were laughing at a story Phil was trying to tell but Bing kept interrupting him.

TAYLOR: I heard Mr Harris is full of jokes.

MANAGER: Yeah, well he was full of something alright. It seemed to me he was trying to tell this crowd about a woman movie-star; about her crawling under a long table at the Brown Derby. This table had a long white table-cloth on it, but Bing kept laughing with the rest of us and saying, "Come on, Phil, you've said enough. They heard it before. Come on."

TAYLOR: What was it about?

MANAGER: Heck, I never did find out.

TAYLOR: Anyway, that was something; seeing those guys in a place like Oddman's. You'd have thought they would have been uptown someplace. You were very lucky.

MANAGER: Yep. And you know I wouldn't have recognized them if the bartender hadn't said anything. Lots of others walked right by them on their way to the studs and fillies rooms and did not notice.

TAYLOR: And you say they had come up to Seattle just to put themselves in Shidel's dry cleaners.

MANAGER: That's what they said. They'd decided they had been drinking too much lately and wanted to stop.

TAYLOR: Seems hard to believe.

MANAGER: Yeah, I know, but there they were. Ole Phil Harris telling this funny story in that deep, dry ole voice of his and ole Bing trying to talk him out of it.

TAYLOR: You know, I heard that Bing's wife, Dixie, had been a patient at Shidel's.

MANAGER: More than once.

TAYLOR: Crosby had been so grateful for what they did for her that he financed an addition to the main building. They named it the 'Dixie Lee' wing. I think they still call it that.

MANAGER: Wasn't that generous of him, though?

TAYLOR: So, how long did the party go on?

MANAGER: Oh, I don't know. I had a couple of martinis and then I had to take off.

TAYLOR: I meant about the gal under the table.

MANAGER: Sure... Anyway, they were still yukking it up when I left. Wish now that I'd stuck around.

TAYLOR: Do you suppose they went through with it? Or could it just have been a gag while they were in Seattle for something else? I'll bet they were just having a little fun.

MANAGER: Oh. I'm not so sure. I believe they checked into the clinic. Why not? After all, that's why they said they were in town. It's a long way from Hollywood and nobody would have to know. A lot of important people go to places out of the way like that.

TAYLOR: I suppose you're right, still it does seem funny. Bing Crosby and his old buddy, Phil Harris putting themselves into an alcohol rehabilitation centre. In all the reading I have on Crosby, I never heard he had any big problem with the bottle during that period of his life. And Harris, he was an iron-man.

MANAGER: You don't ever know, entirely, what's going on. Not even you collectors. Bing probably did a lot of things guys like you never even heard anything about. How about his dying off in Spain like that? Did you ever hear he went to Spain?

TAYLOR: Guess you're right. But I'll tell you this. I'm going up there in a few days. I think I'll look into it.

MANAGER: Then you don't believe what I've been telling you? Okay, go and look into it, but if you do, you won't find Oddman's there on Denny Way nowadays; they've been gone for years.

TAYLOR: Maybe the Shidel Clinic will tell me whether they were there around that time, I mean the mid-50s.

MANAGER: Say, what are you going to do? Are you going to write all this down and then put it in a magazine?

TAYLOR: Don't be silly.

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So... I went to Seattle with Oddman's on my mind and, among other pleasures in a beautiful salt-air city, played detective... The return to the camera-store became a necessity soon thereafter...

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MANAGER: Hi again! Bing pictures?

TAYLOR: Nope, I just want to talk this time.

MANAGER: Who? To me?

TAYLOR: Boy, do I have some things to tell you!

MANAGER: Well...nothing bad, I hope?

TAYLOR: No, nothing like that. About Bing Crosby. Do you remember the other day when you told me about you seeing Crosby at Oddman's in Seattle, years ago?

MANAGER: Yeah...don't tell me you went up to check that out?

TAYLOR: I told you I would. Of course I had other things to do but that was high on my list. I made some phonecalls and drove out to that clinic where you said Bing and Phil Harris were supposed to have been patients.

MANAGER: Was I right? They took the cure?

TAYLOR: Let me start at the beginning. In the first place, that bar was named Odman's not Oddman's. And the hospital was Shadel, not Shidel. Today it's known as Schick Shadel.

MANAGER: Yeah, Schick Shadel; I know that. But what was that you said about Odman's? It's "Odman's", not "Odman's"? What's that mean? I'm all balled up.

TAYLOR: With one 'D', not two. Anyway, that joint is called Hellzapoppin now.

MANAGER: Okay. I thought you kept mispronouncing Shadel a little.

TAYLOR: The place is some kind of an apartment building these days. The clinic moved out to another location in 1964. It is a much bigger drug abuse hospital now.

MANAGER: That figures. So what did you find out?

TAYLOR: The administration has been with them for many years. Mary Ellen Stuart remembers Dixie Lee Crosby. She was very well liked and many of them believed she had a good chance of being permanently cured, but Bing was never a patient there.

MANAGER: Why would he tell that story then?

TAYLOR: Probably a small joke. He was in one of his favourite towns having a blast with an old friend. Laughs, probably, that's all it was, laughs.

MANAGER: Aw...I don't know...

TAYLOR: Don't overlook the fact that this was home turf. I have a tape of Bing sending a message to the city of Tacoma, where he says, "I love Puget Sound, it's beautiful country. I go up there quite often. I love the cool mornings, the tangy air, most of all I love the people. Besides that, he was born in Tacoma.

MANAGER: Did he say that? Wow!

TAYLOR: He had a boat, a kind of yacht, the True Love, and he formed a club of guys associated with him in one way or another. They were known as the Clams. They would show up, cruise all over the Sound for weeks sometimes. Fish, game shoot, shoot the breeze. They'd let their whiskers grow; get all nicely dirty and scruffy. Have a hellava time. He even went so far as to compose a little ditty about them; a theme-song: "Anthem Of The Clams". He used a lot of familiar place-names of the region in the lyrics. Something else, he had a neat little hunting lodge on Haydn Lake in Idaho. He and his family often went there just to relax and get away from the hustle.

Remember the speakeasy that became a hamburger-joint?

MANAGER: Sure, in Tacoma, The Coffee-Pot.

TAYLOR: Well, Bing used to take the train, back in his earliest days in Hollywood, and head home. One of Paul Whiteman's radio producers; he did the Old Gold program for him, his name was Burt McMurtrie. Well, he left broadcasting and returned to his hometown, Tacoma; went back into newspaper work. When Bing would arrive, Burt would take him around to places of interest.

The old Coffee-Pot was one of them. Do you know it's still operating - as a hamburger joint?

MANAGER: I never knew any of that. You really did look him up.

TAYLOR: The Crosby ancestral home is in Olympia, just a few miles south on the freeway. It is tucked in the trees down below the Olympia Brewery by the Tumwater River. It's a museum now.

Also, I contacted other Bing collectors who live in the Puget Sound Country. One, a banker named Bob Lundberg, told me that when he was a student at the University of Washington, he and some of his buddies went down to a speak on Jackson Street. He left early because he had a class. After he had gone, Bing and a couple of other guys strolled into the place. They stood around and gabbed with everybody, then Bing sang a few songs. Bob told me he has spent all the rest of his life wishing he had cut classes that day.

MANAGER: For gosh sakes!

TAYLOR: There's more. Bing had gone, sometimes, to Seattle for their yearly bash, The Seafair Pageant, but in 1955 he and Phil Harris were invited to participate as dual Grand Marshalls in the biggest event, the Torchlight Parade.

MANAGER: Say, that could be about the time I saw them.

TAYLOR: There were these two cats dressed up, no doubt in fancy costumes -

MANAGER: Didn't Bing always wear costumes?

TAYLOR: - rolling along in an open limousine with someone like the governor of the state and beautiful girls in bathing-suit, waving and smiling and nodding to the thousands of sidewalk watchers the whole length of the parade.

MANAGER: Must have been awful.

TAYLOR: Poor devils.

MANAGER: We should have become movie-stars. But, you know, that could have been the very time I saw them at Odman's.

TAYLOR: I heard that it was the very night they both went over to catch Joe Venuti and his Trio at another nitery, Dave's 5th Avenue. I'd be willing to bet he sang songs and Phil Harris told some of his jokes.

MANAGER: Dave's 5th Avenue...nice. Joe Venuti...

TAYLOR: Venuti moved to Seattle around about that time and spent the rest of his life there. Another friendly Crosby Collector who lives

there got to be good friends with him. They hit it off pretty good. Had similiar tastes in things and were both bachelors.

MANAGER: Same kinds of food and booze, I suppose.

TAYLOR: And women. Well, Bill Osborn told me he saw Bing and Phil on another occasion. This was out at the Rainer Ballpark. They had come to watch Floyd Patterson defend his heavyweight title against a local boy.

MANAGER: Who was that? Al Hostack?

TAYLOR: No, Al was a different weight-class. This guy was Pete Radamacher, very popular. And he pulled a big surprise by decking Patterson in the second round. The champ had underestimated old Pete, still he did manage to squeeze in a technical knockout. But he had to go the whole distance to do it. Anyway, Bill Osborn said he watched Crosby in the stands about as much as he watched the matches.

MANAGER: I'll bet he did.

TAYLOR: It turned out that Bing was especially interested in the preliminary match because a youngster from Spokane was one of the fighters. That's where Bing grew up, you know, over there east of the mountains.

MANAGER: Boy, that guy was up there in this northwest country more than I ever knew! How did the match turn out?

TAYLOR: Harris and Crosby had a little sidebet going between them; it turned out okay for Harris.

MANAGER: Okay, okay; you got me. Bing was only kidding when he told everybody at Odman's that he and Phil Harris were going to hang out on the line to dry at Shadel's.

TAYLOR: Maybe it wasn't Bing who said it. Harris was there too, you said. He was the character telling all the jokes. Did you ever thing of that?

MANAGER: Maybe, may be...I never did know who started it.

TAYLOR: Yeah.

MANAGER: But wasn't Crosby up in this neck of the woods a lot, though, considering all the other places he went? It's a wonder that he ever got any work done at all.

TAYLOR: Still, you can bet he did. There were very few of those celebrities busier than he. I've always thought he played about as hard as he worked. Then, don't forget, a lot of his play was work.

MANAGER: And a lot of his work was play.

TAYLOR: True, very true.

MANAGER: Well, I guess I'd better get back to work, myself. Got a lot to do around here.

TAYLOR: I didn't mean to keep you so long; sorry.

MANAGER: Oh, by the way, I meant to ask before: You say that Bing wrote songs, too?

TAYLOR: Oh yes, he collaborated on a lot of them, even worked on the lyrics to some of his biggest hits.

MANAGER: "Anthem Of The Clams", eh?

TAYLOR: Yep. He also hired an all-woman chorus called the Loreli of Goosebay and produced a private recording of it. He even published the sheet music. But nobody but a few collectors ever heard of it.

MANAGER: I sure never heard of it...do you have a copy? I'd like to give it a listen.

TAYLOR: I could make you a cassette of it.

MANAGER: Boy, you collectors must have a lot of fun. Do you have everything that Bing ever made?

TAYLOR: Nobody has it all, but that's what collecting Bing is all about. We're out there looking. Did you ever think you'd like to take up a good hobby?

MANAGER: Not a bad idea, but, naw...I'm too busy and too old to start anything like that now.

TAYLOR: How young do you have to be to start something that gives so much pleasure? Which one of us got to go to Seattle last week and snoop around, talking to nice people?

MANAGER: So, now that you got that business about Bing at Odman's straightened out, are you going to offer it to a magazine?

TAYLOR: What do you think?

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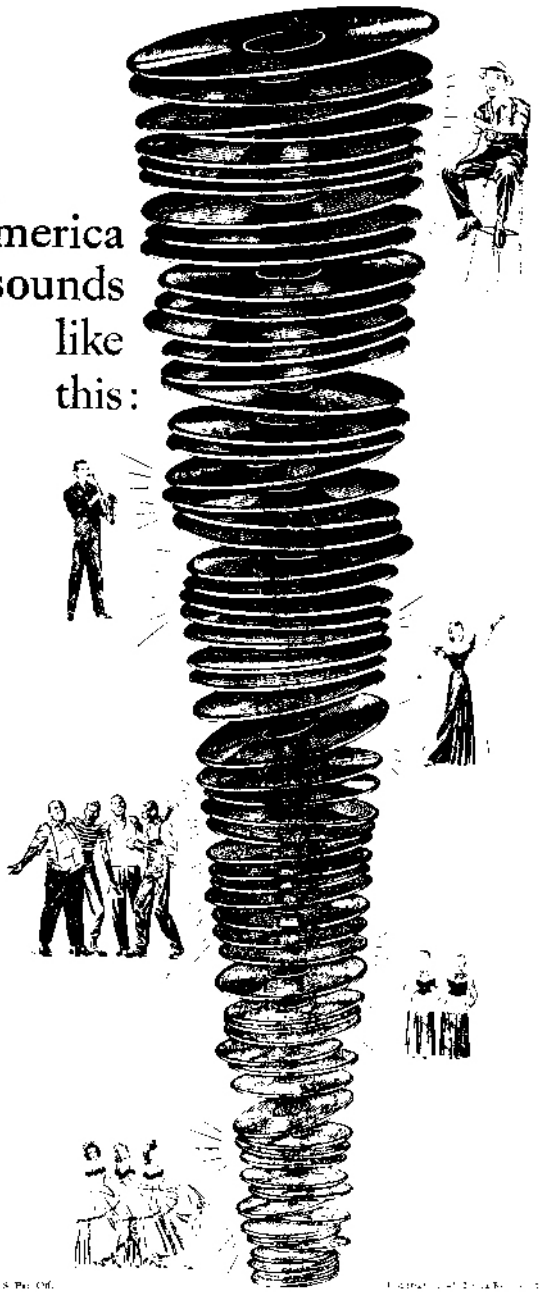
America sounds like this:



A little over ten years ago we began . . . with modest capital, lots of enterprise, and a big idea.

The idea was this:

Our people, we believed, wanted to hear the sounds of America . . . living, vibrant, working, laughing, playing America. Certainly we like the traditional classical music inherited from Europe. But it had been recorded time and again. Where was the voice of the western plains? The warm rhythms of the South? The songs of the herdsman, the mountaineer, the worker?

We decided America wanted to hear itself stretch and grow and sing and laugh. Decca set itself to this task.

We have recorded the love for the land, the joy of our people. You will find them in thousands of Decca records and albums such as "Going My Way" by Bing Crosby . . . "Carousel" . . . "Oklahoma!" . . . "Song of Norway" . . . "Songs of Devotion" by Fred Waring . . . "Lombardoland" by Guy Lombardo . . . Bing Crosby and Bob Hope together on one record in "Put It There, Pal" from "Road to Utopia".

We have also recorded the rhythms of our good neighbors to the South of us . . . the songs of the Mexican Rancheros . . . the rumbas of Havana . . . the ballads of the Calypsos in Trinidad . . . the folk songs of Latin America.

We have great plans for the future. We shall record works other than music . . . great poetry . . . excerpts from great dramas, in the voices of famous artists such as Ronald Colman, Charles Laughton, Fredric March, Herbert Marshall, Thomas Mitchell, Orson Welles, Walter Huston and Loretta Young. Through Decca records, these artists shall become teachers too . . . teachers of poetry and literature to our children.

Consideration for the listener will rule our recordings. If it is a song, you hear every word of the lyric . . . if a dance, you hear pure, dance-able rhythm from beginning to end.

That's the way America likes it.

Listen to America on

DECCA RECORDS

Decca" Reg. U. S. Pat. Off.

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FRANK MURPHY - A WARM MEMORY

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The death of Frank Murphy at the end of May saw the loss of the person who introduced me to the fold of organised Crosby collecting. As a record buyer, I knew I wasn't the only person buying Bing's Brunswick discs but it never occurred to me than an organisation catered exclusively for my Crosby interests. When Frank gained control of the International Crosby Circle by publishing "Bing" magazine, he knew that a lot of picturegoers were Bing fans. He placed an advertisement in 'Films and Filming'. And because movies were another of my passions, I saw the I.C.C. mentioned in the classified section of that magazine, sent off my five bob and joined the clan.

Frank wasn't just a collector. He promoted Bing. He also shared his Crosby acquisitions at meetings and went out of his way to make less familiar material available. His personal collection included the Crosby 78s used by Radio Luxembourg in the 1950s. These had white indicators painted onto the shellac to coincide with orchestral breaks. This allowed DJs to fade a song part way through without spoiling a Bing vocal. I bought my first privately pressed Crosby albums through the ICC when Frank issued some Philco Radio Time songs and some Mack Sennett soundtracks, both in collaboration with Bob Roberts.

When Bing and Kathryn visited Cockermouth in the Lake District in the mid-sixties, Frank took on organisational chores and I began to realise that he was known to Bing and received support for his efforts. Bing referred to him as "Murph" and obliged club members by sending taped messages (and songs) to us through Frank.

The change of Editorship of 'Bing' Magazine saw Frank eventually devoting time to sharing Bing with us in another way. He started up a Photoclub which became established on a worldwide basis. It eventually gained recognition from publishers and record companies who were looking to illustrate some Crosby project or other. Both 'The Crosby Voice' and the now defunct 'Crosby Chronicles' have had front covers adorned by colour photographs of Bing courtesy of Frank's 'New Bing Crosby Photo Club'. There were also the sheets of stamps which he made available. These were miniature colour portraits of Bing to affix to envelopes. I guarantee that no-one ever received such an envelope and threw it away without Frank carefully peeling off the Bing stamp.

Frank was well in evidence at Bing's London Palladium shows in the seventies and he also attended the annual Crosby Leeds meetings with his wife Alma until recent years. I corresponded regularly with Frank and although I knew his health was not good, it was only last year that I realised how much of a problem his heart condition had become. At that stage, he decided to run down the Photo Club, and of course, everyone protested! He duly reconsidered and "Bing Pictorial" continued to arrive every quarter.

A Bing man to the end, he was currently engaged in a project with Leslie Gaylor in the compilation of an album set planned for issue by the Reader's Digest in November. When he was admitted to hospital, the current issue of "Bing Pictorial" was ready to be collated and mailed out. And then we learned of his death. The jovial Geordie is no more.

Keith Parkinson

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THE NEW YORK TIMES SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 1989

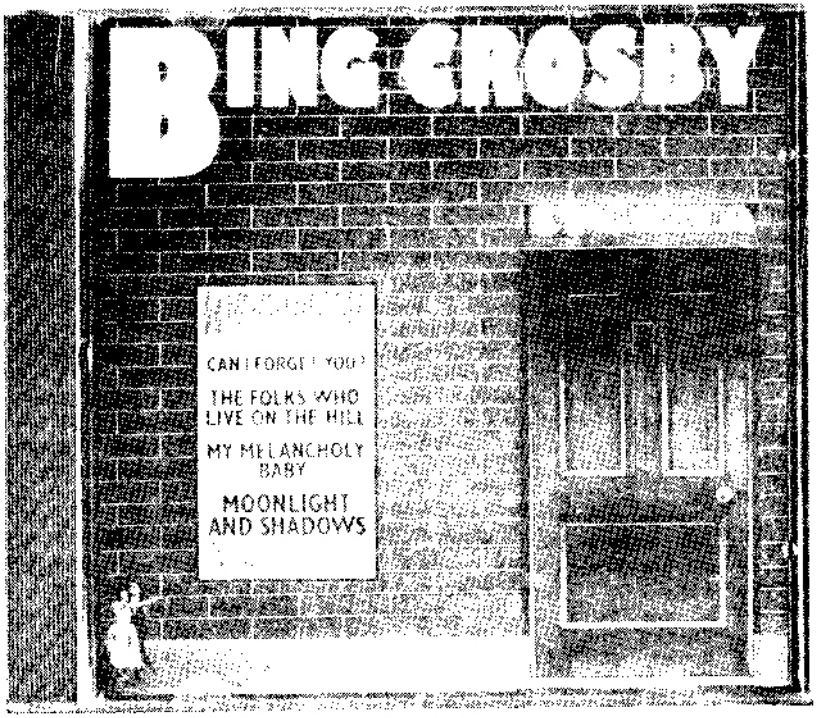
American Sense of Swing

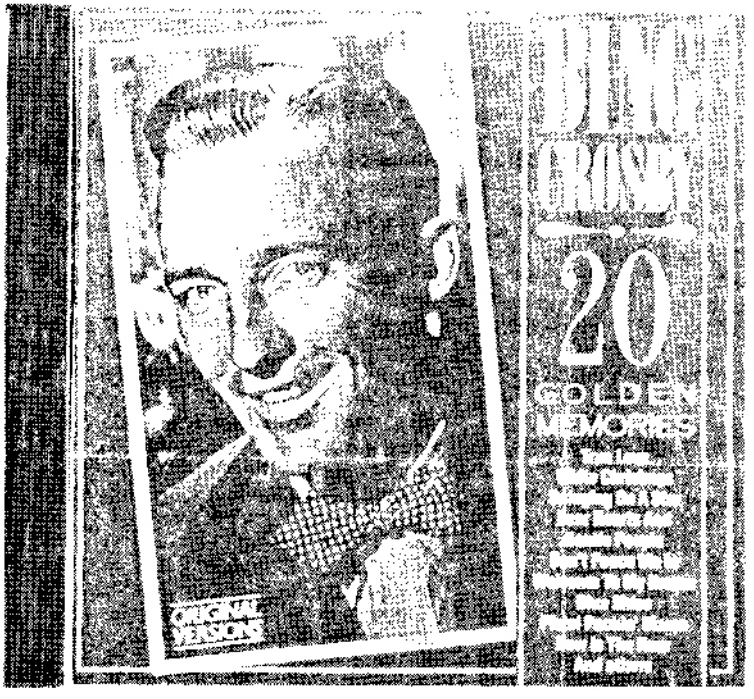
Rosemary Clooney exudes comfort, coziness and serenity, just as her friend and champion, Bing Crosby, once did. If her delivery is not as soft as that of a crooner, she also never really raises her voice. The tone she adopts for both ballads and uptempo songs is warm but matter-of-fact. Like Crosby's, her technical proficiency is such that her singing seems nearly effortless, though of course it isn't.

In recent years, Miss Clooney has become more of a jazz singer than she used to be. And in her current engagement at Rainbow and Stars (30 Rockefeller Plaza), which runs through Feb. 25, she is accompanied by an able quintet that includes Warren Vaché on cornet and Ken Peplowski on tenor saxophone and clarinet. The ensemble's light upbeat arrangements underscore the singer's understated but consistently solid sense of swing.

Miss Clooney's program has an all-American flavor that extends to both the song selections and the modified New Orleans-style arrangements. The centerpiece is a medley of eight Johnny Mercer songs that evoke a simpler, more optimistic time.

Wednesday's early show opened with clear, smoothly sculpted renditions of "I Wish I Were in Love Again" and "Manhattan," and hit peaks of amiably burbling animation with "Strike Up the Band," "G. I. Jive," "Something's Gotta Give" and a jazzed-up "Come On-a My House." In the set's most reflective tunes, "I Remember You" and "I Stayed Too Long at the Fair," Miss Clooney projected a tender clearheaded sense of affirmation.


BING CROSBY
CAN I FORGET YOU?
THE FOLKS WHO LIVE ON THE HILL
MY MELANCHOLY BABY
MOONLIGHT AND SHADOWS


BING CROSBY
20
GOLDEN
MEMORIES

****
WHAT'S NEW ON DISC
****

BING CROSBY - STAGEDOOR - SDC 8087
Pick of the bunch of the latest Crosby CDs is this unlikely release on the 'Stagedoor' label from the UK. What makes it appealing is that is features 16 tracks from Bing's mid to late 30s period which has been largely ignored to date on CD reissues. The tracks, which appear to have been taken from very clean 78s, are presented without fake echo or other 'enhancements'.

Contents: In a little hula heaven, Moonlight and shadows, The moon got in my eyes, Smarty, Can I forget you?, The folks who live on the hill, My heart is taking lessons, 'This is my night to dream, On the sentimental side, Now it can be told, I've got a pocketful of dreams, You must have been a beautiful baby, You're a sweet little headache, I have eyes, The funny old hills, My melancholy baby. All in all, highly recommended.

BING CROSBY - 20 GOLDEN MEMORIES - COMPANION 6187152
This 20 track CD from Denmark is available around town and in general, could be summed up as "featuring the same old stuff". Basically, the contents is the same as 'Bing Crosby Sings Again' which was one of the first Crosby CDs issued a couple of years ago by MCA in America. A couple of tracks are different. I didn't bother picking this one up - one of the members sent me a photocopy of the label - so I can't comment on the quality.

OUT OF NOWHERE - LONDON - 820 553-2
For technical reasons, the CD title 'Out of Nowhere' (pale pink on pale blue) doesn't reproduce here, but that's what in that strip at the top.
A companion piece to 'Where The Blue Of The Night' reviewed last issue, it features a selection of titles from 1931-32-33. Most interesting of the 16 tracks on this British release is a heavily edited version of 'Gems from George Whites Scandals' - cut down to 6.55. A pity that they didn't include the full disc. It would have easily fitted. Overall quality is OK without too much enhancement, but it's obvious that old master tapes were used. Digital reprocessing would have been worth the trouble.

Contents: Were you sincere, Snuggled on your shoulder, I would if I could but I can't, Dinah, Now that you're gone, I've got to sing a torch song, Out of nowhere, At your command, Brother can you spare a dime, Try a little tenderness, How deep is the ocean, Sweet Georgia Brown, Lazy day, Black moonlight, Street of dreams, George White's Scandals.

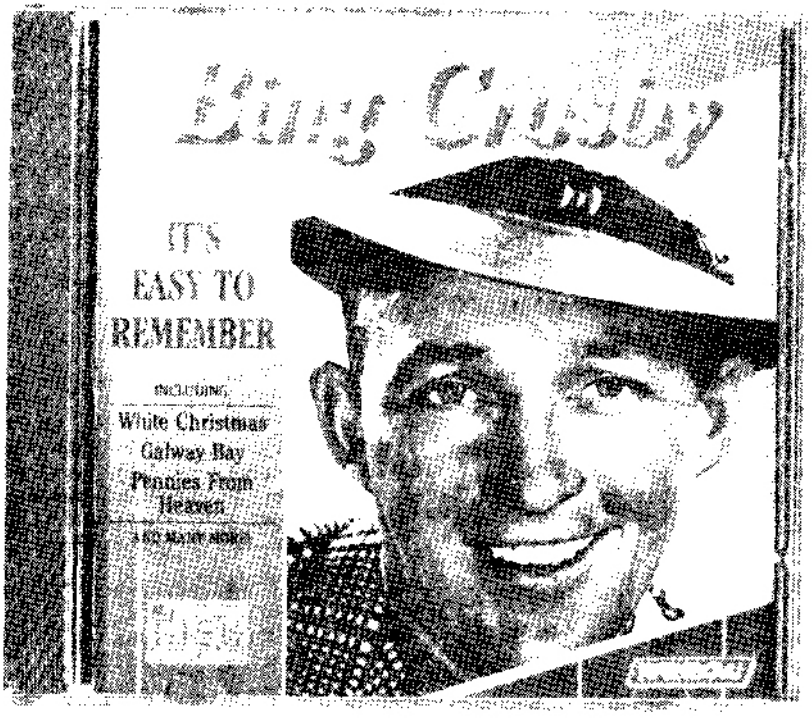
REMEMBERING 1927 - 34 - CONIFER HAPPY DAYS SERIES - CDHD 123
There are 18 tracks on this UK CD - a combination of the old 'Crosby Classics' LP (complete with early-50s echo intact!) plus a bunch of other tracks from here and there.

Contents: Please, Dream Walking, I've got the world on a string, Sweet Georgia Brown, Ghost of a chance, My honey's lovin' arms, Down the old ox road, How deep is the ocean, Temptation, St Louis Blues, Dinah, Somebody stole Gabriel's horn, Stay on the right side of the road, Shine, I'm coming Virginia, There's a cabin in the pines.

RECOLLECTIONS
BING
CROSBY
820 553-2
LONDON
ADRM

TOTAL
PLAYING TIME
56 mins 58 secs
Remembering 1927-34

BING CROSBY
THE STORY


Bing Crosby
IT'S
EASY TO
REMEMBER
INCLUDING
White Christmas
Galway Bay
Pennies From
Heaven

BING CROSBY -THE STORY - DEJAVU DVRECD 16

The most interesting feature of this Italian CD is a cardboard outer sleeve which more or less duplicates what you see opposite. (At least, I hope that you can see it - the original is pretty dark!) The 25 tracks on this issue seem to have been taken from here, there and everywhere, records and radio from the 1930s to the 1950s. Quality varies and whilst not the best I've heard is acceptable.

The contents: Blue of the night, Someday sweetheart, I'm an old cowhand, Pennies from heaven, Marie, The folks who live on the hill, Once in a while, When you wore a tulip, I still love to kiss you goodnight, I don't want to get well, Once in a while, Mexicali Rose, A thousand violins, The Christmas song, Silent night, White Christmas, Silver bells, Adeste fidelis, Down yonder, Glow worm, Mr Moon, Maybe it's because, Pittsburgh Pennsylvania, Please Mr Sun, Blues my naughty sweetie, Whispering.

IT'S EASY TO REMEMBER - RAINBOW - RCD 307

For a change, here's an Australian CD compilation and only $10.99. But even at that price, think twice about buying it. Material has been sourced from what sounds like a mix of 78s, master tapes and old LPs - that's right, old LPs! Why am I so sure? Because two of the tracks actually have scratches across several grooves and they come across loud and clear! For this I need to buy a CD? Also, some of the older songs (eg Temptation) are from the Musical Autobiography recordings.

Contents: White Christmas, When Irish eyes are smiling, Galway Bay, I'll take you home again Kathleen, Too-ra-loo-ra-loo-ral, Never on Sunday, In the cool of the evening, You must have been a beautiful baby, Sam's song, I'm an old cowhand, Pennies from heaven, Sunshine cake, Temptation, MacNamara's band, Mexicali rose, Don't fence me in, Tumbling tumbleweeds, There's a gold mine in the sky, Begin the beguine, Gone fishin', Now is the hour.

==========

Other CDs that we have heard about but haven't sighted yet include 'Fancy Meeting You Here' (Japan), 'Bing Crosby with Gary Crosby and the Andrews Sisters (USA?), 'Golden Gate Collection - 16 World Hits' (USA - a group of not-often reissued titles) and most interestingly, a CD single from Japan of White Christmas/Jingle Bells (although, of course, even 3" CDs only have one side!)

I've also heard tell of another Australian CD issue that I've not seen around. Issued on the Arista/Aricla label (BPCD5092), it features Dream a little dream of me, Three little words, Wrap your troubles in dreams, I'm gonna sit right down, One more time, Just a gigolo, It must be true, Them there eyes, Ol' man river, The little things in life and I'm through with love. Strange that they should bother including a couple of the later tracks, but who knows who is behind these things! By the way, if any Australian reader can tell me where to find this disc, I'd appreciate it.

As always, Derek Parkes CD supply service is recommended, especially now that he has an Australian Bank account into which you can pay direct.
Derek's address: 66 Firs Rd, Firsdown, Salisbury, Wilts SP5 1SW, England.

PERSONALITIES ON PARADE - VOLUME 3

Record companies may be dropping vinyl pressings like the proverbial hot potato (45s are going and Phonogram Australia have announced that they are not issuing any more LPs), but the medium lives on for smaller companies overseas.

Volume 3 in John Newton's fascinating series includes two unheard Crosby tracks - one a standout. From an early 1934 aircheck, we have Bing with the Mills Brothers on 'Nagasaki'. Sound quality is excellent and makes the cost of the whole disc worthwhile. The other Crosby track 'Where Is Central Park' was originally recorded for the soundtrack of 'Sing You Sinners' (when the movie still carried the working title of 'Harmony For Three'. (You may be able to read the label in the upper left of the LP cover.) Not a particularly distinguished song, but one to add to the collection nonetheless.

The other titles on the LP are a parody of 'Yes we have no bananas' from the soundtrack of the 1930 Al Jolson movie 'Mammy' (but a very different version from that used in the circulating print of the film), Willie Howard: 'Got a Gal in Cal-i-for-ni-ay' (1936), The Yacht Club Boys: 'Mahatma Ghandi' (1932) and 'Spain' (1933) - two great unissued sides which were probably considered a little risque for the times, Tony Martin: 'I'll never smile again' (a 1940 blow-up in which he impersonates Harry Richman!), Leon Errol: 'On the Isle of Oomph' (1935), Gene Austin: 'Nobody's Sweetheart' (1933), Joseph E Howard: 'What's the use of dreaming?' (1938), Harry Richman: 'Rolling along' (1936), Maurice Chevalier: 'Home made heaven/M'sieu baby' (1933) and Baby Rose Marie: 'Come out, come out wherever you are' (1933).

Available from: John Newton, PO Box 471, Claymont, Delaware 19703, USA.

BING - THE VOICE OF AMERICA - SPOKANE 30

The LPs on this page have been mentioned in the past, but as I now have copies, I thought that I would give some more details. This LP (subtitled 'Der Bingle Vol 4), features two complete broadcasts. The complete Cavalcade of America program "The Road To Berlin" of February 5, 1945 plus the complete Telephone Hour program "Presenting Bing Crosby" of July 2, 1945.

Bing sings a number of familiar songs but we also get 'There's no place like home', 'You're a grand old flag', 'When you were sweet sixteen' and 'The Strawberry Blonde'. Vern Taylor contributes some fine cover notes in his inimitable style.

BING IN THE THIRTIES - VOL 7 - SPOKANE 28 and VOL 8 - SPOKANE 29

As both these Spokane issues have identical covers, we've only shown one. They feature KMH tracks from 1939 - a mixture of songs that Bing recorded and a lot that he didn't, including: I want a girl, Wishing will make it so, Oh by jingo, Are you having any fun?, Scatterbrain, Deep in a dream, Together, The umbrella man, I get along without you very well and Genevieve.

All three of the above LPs are produced by Larry Kiner and are available from him direct at Spokane Records, PO Box 724, Redmond WA 98073-0724. Cost is very reasonable, from memory, around $8.00 per disc, but you'd better write first.

CROSBYANA - VOLUME 5 - FROM BINGS COLLECTION - BROADWAY INTERMISSION BR135

(See over page for cover of this and the next two records.) This disc features a number of tracks from radio of the 1950s (with Buddy Cole) and TV of the 1960s. Tracks include: On the street where you live (TV), Davy Crocket (TV 1959), Blue Moon (radio), When you're in love with someone (radio) and If I had my druthers (TV). Quality is quite acceptable.

CROSBYANA - VOLUME 6 - FROM BINGS COLLECTION - BROADWAY INTERMISSION BR142

This disc features a few commercial records (The New Ashmolean Marching Society, What do we do with the world), TV tracks (Love makes the world go round, Straight life/Little green apples) and private recordings (It's lovely at Palm Beach, Moving to Elko Nevada, and Safari to Tanzania.) Many of these you won't have heard before. Worth having.

BING CROSBY AND RED NICHOLS 'TOGETHER AGAIN' - BROADWAY INTERMISSION BR142

Bing and Red appeared together on a handful of Whiteman sides and much later, Red was a member of various bands backing Bing's commercial recordings. Mostly this disc features the latter although there are a couple of radio tracks thrown in. You may be surprised at some of the records that feature Red. They include: Chicago style, Gone fishin', My heart is a hobo, Fatherly advice and Oh tell me why (in which Bing, via early multi-tape dubbing, supplies his own male chorus).

All three are available direct from Stan Hester, Broadway Intermission, PO Box 100, Brighton, Michigan 48116, USA. Cost is extremely low - less than $8 a record. Write for details.

THE VOICE OF AMERICA

Crosbyana - Volume 5

From Bing's Collection

BING CROSBY

FROM BING'S PERSONAL COLLECTION

CROSBY-ANA VOLUME 6

Bing Crosby and Red Nichols
"TOGETHER AGAIN"

A CROSBY CASSETTE FROM THE BCHS

Although we don't have any cost details as yet, the Bing Crosby Historical Society has released a cassette (Bing and the BCHS) which blends rare interviews (Bing's sister Mary Rose) with radio and TV tracks which you may not have heard before (Rendezvous with a dream, Praise the lord and pass the ammunition, The girl in the bonnet of blue, etc.)

For details, write Ken Twiss, BCHS, PO Box 216, Tacoma, Washington 98401, USA.

THE CHRONOLOGICAL BING CROSBY VOL 12 - STILL NOT OUT

John McNicholas reports problems with the test-pressings of Volume 12 which has resulted in the masters having to be remade. Be patient - the next disc in this eagerly awaited series will be out soon.

YOUR HIT PARADE

Time-Life Music, 1450 E. Parham Road, Richmond, VA 23280, USA has a new issue in the works called 'Your Hit Parade'. Each album features original recordings from a particular year of the 1940s and 50s including several from Bing.

These are available on 2 LP sets ($16.99), cassette ($14.99) and CD ($16.99). Packing and postage are extra.

Confessions of a New CD Owner

MAKING WAVES

DAVID BROWNE

FOR THE PAST FEW years, I've been decrying the CD format to anyone who would listen. It was a cold, impersonal medium, I would rant. A rip-off designed to force people to repurchase their entire record collections. A means of turning music into another modern convenience item, just like a microwave.

Well, *mea culpa*—sort of. Three months ago, I wandered into an electronics store. No sooner had I started spouting phrases like "four-times oversampling" than I had handed over my credit card and walked out with a shiny, brand-new CD player.

Granted, this was partly a business decision. My job is to review records, among other things, and record companies send the occasional free CD this way. Also, unlike the average consumer, I'll be the first to admit that this is a business expense.

Flush with the excitement of a new toy, I brought it home and fervently connected it to my existing components. Easy—just a few connections here and there. Then I popped in the first few CDs at hand: the Keith Richards solo album, an old Velvet Underground album and a Harold Melvin & the Blue Notes greatest hits. And I waited to be transformed by waves of sound.

Well, I wasn't. Frankly, I didn't—and still don't—hear a major sonic difference. A friend who is an opera buff hears a new clarity on his classical CDs, but to me, Lou Reed's scratchy guitar and Teddy Pendergrass' husky wail sound the same as they did on vinyl.

Yet I now realize the appeal of those cute, cuddly CDs. The thrill is undeniably addictive: Just drop the disk into the drawer and away you go. No pops or clicks, no turning over the disc after side 1 ends, no dust on the needle. You don't even have to close the drawer yourself. Talk about convenience.

Anything that makes music listening a more enjoyable experience is okay by me. But I still have the nagging feeling that I've been strong-armed into this. I go into record stores and see row after row of CDs, and as much as I would love a new, laser-perfect copy of, say, "Exile on Main St.," Neil Young's "Harvest" or Marshall Crenshaw's first album, I can't bring myself to lay down the 12 or 15 bucks. Maybe I'm just cheap, but that seems an awful lot to pay for a *record*.

But I also realize that CDs are the wave of the future, and I'd better get used to it. Suddenly, I find myself thinking, "Gee, wonder what *this* would sound like on CD?" as I stare at my quaint LPs. But while I reach for yet another CD fix, I still can't help feeling that They—the business, the corporations, the manufacturers, whoever—are winning. As they used to say, "What a bummer."

CD's: Too Much of a Good Thing?

Record catalogues continue to grow, but buying has leveled off.

When the Compact Disk was introduced to the American market in April 1983, its inventors — the Sony and Philips corporations — predicted that it would render the long-playing record extinct within a decade. The LP may not take that long to die.

In the first half of this year, CD's in all categories of music outsold LP's for the first time, according to the Record Industry Association of America. The current Schwann record catalogue lists more than 20,000 CD titles of all kinds, and retailers around the country are clearing out their LP bins to accommodate the explosion of CD's.

But there are some in the record industry who fear that CD's have proliferated too quickly: that after five years of a CD drought, when consumers had few titles to choose from, the market is becoming flooded. What makes the record industry particularly nervous is that according to the Electronics Industry Association, only 15 to 20 percent of American households have CD players, and after five years of steady growth, player sales seem to have hit a plateau.

Smaller Selections

Record companies say the vigor with which they have been issuing both new titles and back catalogue on CD should attract those consumers who have not changed to the new format. But given the cost of CD's — $9 to the retailer, $15 to the consumer for a full-price recording — the quick expansion of the catalogue has led many retailers to be more selective in their ordering. As a result, even the largest chains are no longer able to offer consumers the kind of full-line service they offered at the height of the LP era. And even selective ordering has not kept slower-selling CD's from cluttering the bins.

A "CD glut," as many industry executives openly call it, has already hit the classical-music market, where current recordings of standard-repertory works are now forced to compete for consumers' attention with dozens of earlier versions, including legendary performances reissued on budget-priced CD's.

In both classics and pop, there is still consumer resistance to CD prices, despite the decline from their introductory high, which was as much as $30, to around $15 for a top-line recording — about $6 more than an LP cost before CD's came along. And although record labels are resisting the move, many industry executives feel that further reductions in price will be necessary soon if the format is to make greater inroads in the market.

One reason cited for the oversupply of CD's is a change in the supply-and-demand equation over the last 18 months. On the supply side, the number of CD manufacturing plants has grown from only 2 in 1983 to more than 50. Competition among the plants for business from record labels has brought down the cost of a raw CD (unpackaged and not accounting for recording costs and royalties) to less than $1 from about $3 in 1984. Most labels are expanding their CD catalogues by a few dozen titles a month. But as the number of new customers has leveled off, the disks have begun to pile up.

Signs of a glut are particularly apparent in classical music, which accounts for only 4 percent of the American record market, according to the Record Industry Association of America. But an East Coast regional manager for the Tower Records national retail chain — which has long prided itself on carrying full lines in all genres — says that 25 percent of the chain's sales are of classical music. And industry observers point out that CD sales trends have emerged in classics a year or two before other kinds of music.

"What often happens in any industry," said Joseph F. Dash, vice president and general manager of CBS Masterworks, "is that when you have an undercapacity, people overreact without thinking about the big picture. So we all began issuing on CD some of the wonderful performances we had in our back catalogues. And suddenly, what was a dearth has become an overabundance."

Ken Twiss, as curator of The Bing Crosby Historical Society, keeps alive the memory of Bing.

A man crowned BING

Keeper of the crooner's museum has been a fan most of his lifetime

By Bart Ripp
The News Tribune

Every day is White Christmas in the basement of Pantages Centre.

Outside, the traffic signal at 9th and Commerce whispers "Bing-bong! Bing-bong! Bing-bong!" Inside The Bing Crosby Historical Society gallery, a tape serenades visitors with "Let It Snow."

Dead 12 years, remembered for sighing songs, renowned for golf tournaments, revered at Christmas time, Bing Crosby lives in the basement of Pantages Centre and in the minds of the society's 350 apostles around the world.

None is more bound to Bing than Ken Twiss, the society's founder and president.

From 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. weekdays, Twiss preserves, protects and defends the Bing legacy at the society's snappy little gallery. This shrine includes sheet music for "One, Two, Button Your Shoe," a table made in 1876 by Bing's grandfather, Bing pins, Bing belt buckles, Bing wristwatches, a can of Bing beer brewed in Folkestone, England, a BING C license plate from New York state, Jim Beam bourbon decanters from the Bing Crosby Pro-Am golf tournament at Pebble Beach, an array of photos showing Bing with Bob Hope, Rudy Vallee and Phil Harris, and the only memorabilia for sale — an unused wax carton meant to hold Bing Crosby ice cream.

Twiss discovered a lode of cartons in an antique shop on Broadway. He will sell you one for $3. The flavor, naturally, was vanilla.

Twiss, 78, is a Cleveland, Okla., native who moved to Tumwater in 1913, graduated from Puyallup High School in 1931 and became a Bing buff during the Depression.

"The only entertainment then was on phonograph records," Twiss said, "and the only way I could afford them was to buy at the Goodwill and Salvation Army."

Twiss accumulated more than 900 Bing 78s, then donated them to the Tacoma Public Library when he became a cook on the submarine USS Intimidor during World War II. Twiss, stationed in San Diego's Naval Training Center after the war, became a regular in the audience at Crosby's weekly radio show broadcast from the CBS Studios at Sunset and Vine in Hollywood. A CBS producer named Bill Morrow introduced Bing to his biggest fan.

"He was a very easy person to know," Twiss said. "But I didn't want to bother him, so I stayed at a respectful distance."

During the 1950s, Twiss was an executive chef with Pan American Airlines. Living in Burlingame, Calif., Twiss used to see Bing and Kathryn Crosby walking the streets of their hometown of Hillsborough, Calif.

"I would wave to him on the street and he would wave back," Twiss said, "but I didn't want to bother him."

Twiss moved to Tacoma and became chef at Johnny's Dock and Busch's Round Table. He listened to Bing Crosby records every day. One day in 1977, Twiss was in Candid Photo Shop at 15th Street and Tacoma Avenue when he heard on the radio that Bing Crosby had died.

"I knew right away that I had to do something to honor Bing," Twiss said. He formed The Bing Crosby Historical Society.

"If there's one word to describe Bing, it's charisma," Twiss said. "He is the epitome of all human males. He could be with anybody and make them feel comfortable. I admire him more as a man than an entertainer."

"Just One Word of Consolation" is playing in the gallery. The song always makes Twiss cry. A man comes in to look at Twiss's life's work, signs the guest register and asks if the green Bing Crosby necktie is for sale.

What if, miracle of miracles, Bing himself walked in?

"You know, I've thought about that," Twiss said. "But Bing was uncomfortable with adulation. I would just greet him like I do with anybody. I would ask him to sign the book and look around."

The Bing cycle:

Celebrity gawkers come and go searching for clues of Crosby lore

Faces peek in the front window when Morry and Mary Abbott come down for breakfast in the morning.

Or some silly guy sits on the porch with an enraptured look. Or this weird woman speaking Dutch runs around back, taking pictures through the peonies.

"It's a museum to them," Mary said. "They never say a word. It's like we aren't here."

Mary and Morry Abbott have lived at 1112 N. J St. since 1948. The Abbotts raised three children in the house, yet nothing has been more rigorous than putting up with the creatures who come looking for Bing Crosby.

Other than the goofs lurking on the porch, one clue reveals why this house is different than any other on North J Street. Halfway up the 11 steps leading to the Abbotts' house is a small plaque placed by The Sons of the American Revolution. The plaque reveals that Harry Lillis "Bing" Crosby was born here May 2, 1904.

That is partly correct. The crooner who smoked pipes, adored golf and wore mellow hats was born in the house on North J Street, but the date was May 3, 1903. When Crosby died of a heart attack after playing a round of golf near Madrid, Spain in 1977, his birth date was reported as May 2, 1904. That date is etched on his headstone at Holy Cross Cemetery in Culver City, Calif.

But the baptismal certificate from St. Patrick Parish across the street from the Abbotts reveals that the fourth of Harry and Catherine Crosby's seven children was born May 3, 1903 and baptized with the Latin name Herricum Lillis Crosby.

All the Abbotts knew when they bought the house 41 years ago was that the voice of "White Christmas," the partner of Bob Hope on the road and the idol of millions had been born in one of the upstairs bedrooms.

"I heard Bing came by a couple times, but I wasn't even home," Morry said.

Morry probably was working construction for his next-door neighbor, the contractor Mike Tucci. Before buying the house on North J Street, Morry played baseball.

"I was signed by Detroit and got sent to Beaumont, good God, Texas," he said.

"If I go in the house she'll put me to work running the vacuum cleaner," Morry said, so I stay out here.

Mary said Bob Crosby, the crooner's younger and less talented brother, once stopped to see the house. It was an exciting day for the Abbotts because hardly anybody ever came to visit in a taxi.

Bing had twin boys (Phillip and Dennis Crosby, who were in the service at Fort Lewis," Mary said. "but they never came by."

The Bing Crosby Historical Society would love to buy the house, but Morry and Mary and their dog, Tammy, aren't budging.

"It's too big for us and all," Mary said, "but we haven't got anyplace to go. Think of the closing costs and hooking up the phone again. Where would we go? This is our home."

Morry was an outfielder who ascended to the old San Diego Padres in the Pacific Coast League. Fifty summers ago, he led the Tacoma Tigers to the Class C Western International League pennant. For hitting .295, with 37 home runs and 123 runs batted in, he was acclaimed Tacoma's most valuable player and awarded a large trophy that rests on the mantel.

In this house, the Crosby boy born in 1903 acquired his singular nickname. As a toddler, little Harry pleaded with his parents to read him the comic strip "The Bingville Bugle," crying, "Bing! Bing! Bing!" The name stuck.

The Crosbys didn't. They fled Tacoma in 1906 for the wilds of Spokane.

In 1948, the Abbotts bought the house on North J Street — not because they cared about Bing Crosby, but so they could be close to the church across the street.

The Abbotts do not welcome their notoriety. Unannounced guests and geeks are asked to stay on the sidewalk. Morry, 72, spends much of his time tending the lawn and trimming the bushes.

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BITS 'N' PIECES
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* UK member Arnold Baker has not been at all well in recent times. In fact, he is only now recovering from major heart surgery (and ensuing complications). He asks to be remembered to all his friends in Australia and if he is not back in the tape business yet, he will be in the near future. Why not drop Arnold a line: 48 Groomsport Rd, Bangor, CO. Down BT20 5LP. In 'Trading Post' this issue, you can also read that Arnold is disposing of his LP collection.

* News from the UK of a new Christmas compilation due out in time for the festive season. This will include a handful of the more familiar Crosby Christmas numbers, but also such rarely re-issued titles as 'A Crosby Christmas - Pts 1 and 2', The 1942 recording of 'Silent Night', 'The First Snowfall' and 'Little Jack Frost Get Lost' among others. Respected British collector Leslie Gaylor is reputed to have had a strong influence in the choice of titles. Good one Leslie!

* Sad to note the passing of two more people associated with Bing. Firstly, Beatrice Lillie who made one of her rare film appearances with Crosby back in 1938 in 'Doctor Rhythm'. Bea was a remarkable 94!
Also gone is Herbert Mills at 77. Herbert was one of the two surviving Mills Brothers. You know, I've always thought it a pity that when Bing's recording career enjoyed a resurgence in the mid-1970s, someone didn't think of getting him to cut an LP with the Mills boys. When you look back at their appearance on Bing's 50th anniversary TV special, you can see how good they still sounded together.

* Mea culpa! In the last issue, when I mentioned the Crosby Poll to pick Bing's ten 'best' and 'worst' records between a certain period, I gave the years as 1934 - 1936. Wrong!!! That should have been 1946. Possibly for this reason, Leigh Brown who is conducting the poll reports no response from Australia. Not very good. The details of the poll are on page 60 of our March magazine. How about it? Send Leigh your suggestions.

* Also last issue, I reported that there is now a Panasonic video recorder that will play both American (NTSC) and French (Secam) systems through any Australian (PAL) TV set. The only problem was the cost. Well I've since learned that there is another Panasonic model (L25) which plays NTSC (but not Secam but who needs that) and costs a far more reasonable $800.

* DAT (Digital Audio Tape) is about to make its long delayed appearance in the USA (and therefore probably here too). DAT, in case you didn't know, is a totally new cassette system (smaller than ordinary tapes) which offers sound quality equal to compact discs. Interesting to see whether any Crosby compilations will turn up on DAT. Probably, if they catch on like CDs have.

* There's a new Crosby Club in the USA called 'Bingthings Society' and set up by Bob Lundberg. Overseas membership is US$12.00 for a quarterly magazine. Write to Bob for details: 4333 So. 41st St, #28, Tacoma, WA 98409 or at 4084 Cherry Tree Place, Lake Havasu, AZ 86403.

A LIMITED EDITION COMMEMORATIVE ALBUM FOR OUR FRIENDS IN THE RETAIL FOOD INDUSTRY

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COLLECTOR'S
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For a change in Collector's Corner, let's look at some uncommon LP covers.

The Kraft 75th Anniversary Radio Special disc was made in 1978 as a special gift for Kraft employees in the USA. It features extracts from various KMH broadcasts over the years and includes Bing, Jolson, Nat 'King' Cole, Nelson Eddy, Paul Whiteman and many others. Narration by Eddy Arnold & Ed Herilhy.

'Kerstfeest' is a Dutch LP featuring a collection of Xmas songs by Bing (guess which titles), Vera Lynn and a group of other artists who I'm not familiar with but perhaps one of our members in The Netherlands can tell us more about.

******
CORNER
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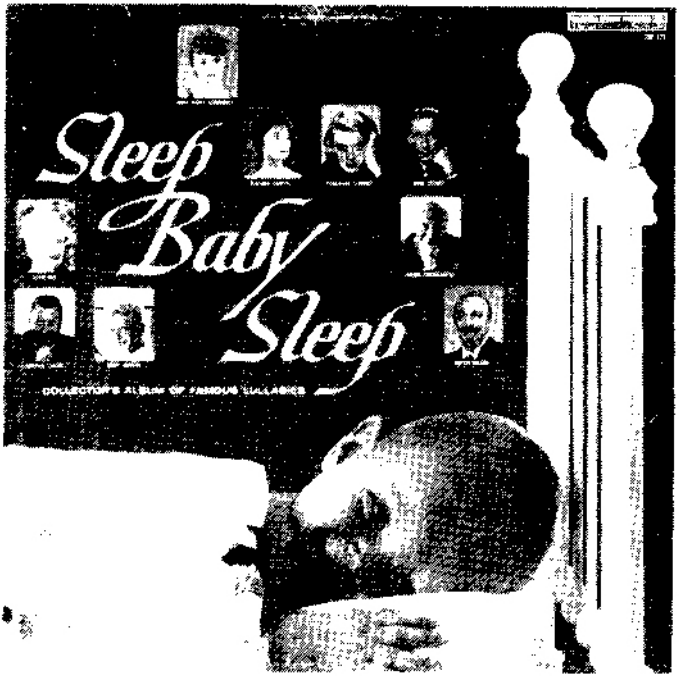
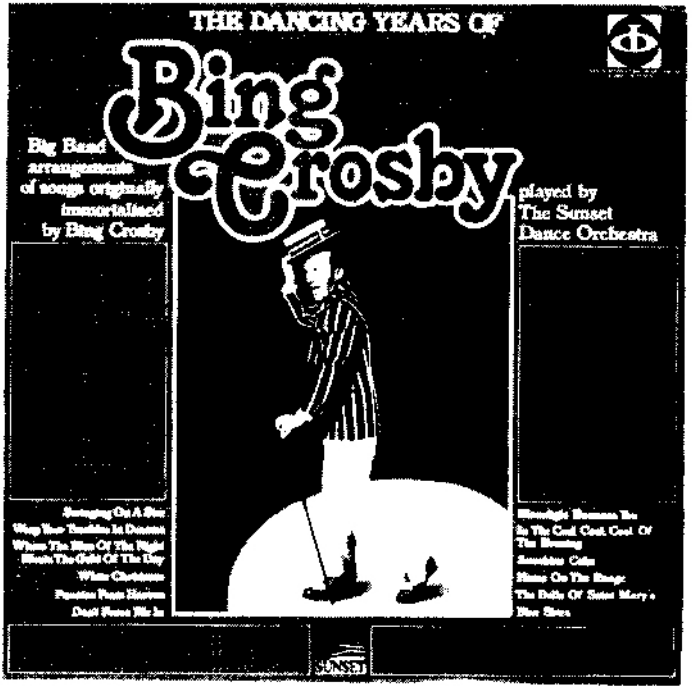
'Sleep Baby Sleep' is one of the many Columbia Special Products LPs issued over the years. Bing can be heard on 3 tracks from his childrens' LPs from the late 1950s - Never Be Afraid, Star Light Star Bright and Little Boy Blue. Other artists inc. Mary Martin, Doris Day and Diahann Carroll. Quite pleasant listening if you can't sleep!



'The Dancing Years Of Bing Crosby' has a dozen well known Crosby songs by The Sunset Dance Orchestra in dance tempo: cha cha, fox trot, waltz, quick step and tango. Nothing startling but an interesting item for the collection. Other discs feature Jolson and Astaire.



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COLLECTOR'S
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Two pages from a rare British flyer for the Decca/Brunswick company from the late 1930s

Special Souvenir Records

Full details inside

DECCA Brunswick
DECCA POLYDOR Records
FOR AUGUST, 1937

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CORNER
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MAGNIFICENT RECORDS

by

BING CROSBY

SWEET LEILANI In a Little Hula Heaven	02443
Blue Hawaii Sweet is the word for you	02444
What will I tell my Heart Moonlight and Shadows	02402

and

THE STREET SINGER

It looks like Rain in CHERRY BLOSSOM LANE Where are You ?	F 6465
SEPTEMBER IN THE RAIN Broken-Hearted Clown	F 6432
The Greatest Mistake of my Life When the Harvest Moon is Shining	F 6452
Will You Remember ? In a Little French Casino	F 6438
Marta Call Me Darling	F 5608

DECCA | ***Brunswick***

DECCA-POLYDOR Records for OCTOBER, 1937

ALFRED IMHOF LTD.,
English and Continental Record Specialists,
Imhof House,
NEW OXFORD STREET, W.1.

ICK TODD

Selects

AMERICA'S FAVORITE SONGS

Including

"YOU ARE MY SUNSHINE"
"I'M THINKING TONIGHT OF MY BLUE EYES"
"IT MAKES NO DIFFERENCE NOW"
"TAKE ME BACK TO MY BOOTS AND SADDLE"
"SWEETHEARTS OR STRANGERS"
"THE BELLS OF SAN RAQUEL"
AMONG OTHERS

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DICK TODD - THE CANADIAN BING CROSBY

****

by Vernon Wesley Taylor

> "When the American writer, Dorothy Parker, looked down into the dead face of F. Scott Fitzgerald (she had been waiting her turn in a very short line in the funeral home), her words came out wrong but her sentiments didn't. "Goodbye you poor sonofabitch", she said and turned away.
>
> It was the same world...as Dick Todd, give or take a few years, and they dwelled in it pretty much the same way. The writer began a little earlier than the singer to address his audience but the singer's message has become more immediate to this later age, lingering on, speaking to us from our turntables and tapedecks, telling us of the good times. He sang of the way things were, if not the way they are, with him...all in his haunting, strange vocal cry."
>
> (Vernon Wesley Taylor, from the preface of the book, 'DICK TODD: King Of The Juke Box', 1987.)

Dick Todd was still in his early twenties when he broke into showbusiness in his hometown of Montreal. By 1937 he was leading a popular dance-band, playing dates in the better hotels, clubs and theatres; he even had a radio show under his own name. By the time the husky, handsome redhead with the friendly blue eyes was rapidly becoming known as 'The Canadian Bing Crosby', he was beguiled away to New York. He had made a few records for Canada's Bluebird label, but now he signed a contract with the parent company and went south for the truly bigtime.

He always denied that he deliberately imitated the famous 'groaner' but few took him seriously. He claimed that he could not help sounding like him but whatever the truth may have been, it was precisely because he had a similiar vocal delivery to Crosby's that was able to establish his career; there was no denying that. In New York, he began producing USA Bluebirds of number which the better-known singers were doing, thereby capitalizing on their popularity. Known as 'cupper' singing, this somewhat furtive endeavour was an old tactic that had long been used to attract attention to the beginners and, quite incidentally, to produce popular records at a lower cost.

Todd was provided with a false biography designed to enhance his presence. His name began turning up on the sales charts, he appeared in small spots on radio and he was signed with the Larry Clinton orchestra. Within weeks he was off and running, a new star about to burst in the firmament of entertainment. He was neither the first nor the last to use 'sounding like Bing' as a springboard to fame. If only he had been coached as the others were, he would have known when to stop.

DICK TODD

A NEW STAR....

Two smart numbers for dancing, sung by our own Canadian singing star, Dick Todd. Already well known to many through his Canadian radio broadcasts, this personable young singer has been booked for American radio in the fall. You will want to hear this sensationally new singer and here are two tuneful selections that you will like, sung in the appealing Dick Todd style.

VOCADANCE

25843
75c

As Long As We're Together — Vocadance
Rule, Tenderfoot, Ride — Vocadance
(From the film "Cowboy from Brooklyn")
Dick Todd

EVER since Cliff Arquette caught the imagination of listeners as Grandpa Sneed on the old Packard "Hollywood Mardi Gras," he has been radio's No. 1 old man. Many stars, including Burns and Allen, Bob Burns, Edgar Guest, have presented his old-man characters, and today Cliff is the Slap-happy Grandpappy star of "Avalon Time" (heard over NBC, Wednesday, 8:30 p.m. EST; 7:30 p.m. CST; 9:30 p.m. MST; 8:30 p.m. PST). Actually, Slap-happy Grandpappy is only thirty-three years old. In a fast-moving program which is exactly geared to his brand of comedy, Grandpappy Cliff draws an impressive array of musical and dramatic talent into a half hour packed with fun from the opening jingle of the cash register ("Don't forget your change") to the bubbling signature song by Bob Strong's orchestra. Associated with Arquette since he joined "Avalon Time" has been Don McNeill, of the famous "NBC Breakfast Club," who acts as master of ceremonies. Musical star of the show is Dick Todd, young baritone who has sky-rocketed to fame in recent months until his records outsell even Bing Crosby's. Here are pictures of these and other stars you'll hear on "Avalon Time" every Wednesday.

MANY RECORDING artists will follow Dick Todd's lead and send copies of their disks to army and navy posts throughout the country!

DICK TODD—"The Singing Hills" and "Saddle Your Dreams" (Bluebird 10596), two cowboy ditties by the flame topped baritone in the fine Bing Crosby manner which has made his vocals on the NBC-Avalon show a standout.

CHICAGO.—Crooning comet of the moment, we'd say, is Dick Todd. The twenty-five-year-old Canadian has been and is sweeping right through the air, with public favor spreading out in the wake of his flaming hair and warm voice. Formerly Dick sang with Larry Clinton and Artie Shaw and soloed on the Bob Benchley show; now he's singing on "Avalon Time." Todd isn't a Crosby carbon, but he does have a similar husky vibrancy in his deep baritone voice. His disks sell like hot cakes, with plenty of vocal syrup. His colorful records of "Blue Evening," "Blue Orchids," and "Deep Purple" are best-sellers. He was recently given an award as "outstanding air vocalist" by the musical publication, *Metronome*. Dick's voice makes you think of something like an echo in the valley at twilight, so he makes a good teammate for the big breeze Skelton!

THE WICKED WINDY TOWN

After a generous taste of Manhattan's autumn dampness, your servant flew westward to Chicago Monday for several hours of fun with NBC's Ransom Sherman and Montreal's Dick Todd. Fun we had aplenty—sitting in as guest at "Club Matinee" and "Avalon Time"—but the gay lightness dispensed by Sherman and Todd was marred somewhat by the tenseness which has gripped Chicago and its gentlefolk these past few days

His work on local New York radio quickly led to network feature billings. He became a regular on the Red Skelton Chicago-based 'Avalon Time' program in 1939. By diligent effort he managed radio dates in several places in the two large cities, apparently almost simultaneously. Ultimately he had a five-a-week network morning show, 'Presenting Dick Todd', over Mutual aimed directly at housewives. He guested on prestigious national slots as 'The Chamber Music Society of Lower Basin Street' with Dinah Shore and the 'Music For Millions' show. His work with Larry Clinton and Glenn Miller also appeared on records. By the end of World War II, cupper records were being made of his own high-sales, popular recordings. His fans, mostly women of all ages, could not get enough of him.

Motion-pictures turned out be be a different matter; they eluded his boyish charms, and for several reasons. Todd, always impatient, felt it unnecessary to bring himself along slowly, learning as he went. In Los Angeles, it was expected that he would have no trouble getting up on the big screen, but he did not consider it all-important to take even a few lessons in acting, though there were many small informal 'studios' all over the city. Consequently, his first efforts in front of the cameras were awkward for him and he failed to overcome his initial stiffness. Everything a performer does on stage becomes an ingrained habit unless he is very careful. He also photographed as a chunky figure, which was quite unacceptable then as an image of an heroic personality. He made one or two musical shorts and a western or perhaps even two. A pair of 'Soundies' which were three-to-four minute films exhibited in bars and taverns from a back-lighted screen in a television-like cabinet, may be all that is left of his Hollywood career. He returned to the East, explaining in print that "those movie stars are just skinny little guys".

Todd's popularity on records had certainly not diminished during his brief West Coast sojourn and before long he was back on radio. He began a regular stint over NBC with the enormously popular Lucky Strike Cigarette show, 'Your Hit Parade' and he was again back in stride doing what he knew best. Despite the rather crowded field, this youthful Canadian had become one of America's acclaimed vocalists. In some quarters he was considered a better singer than Bing, with his clear appealing high register.

The course was wide open, 'popsinging' had never before been so big. Perry Como and Frank Sinatra, taking similiar paths were a close second and third (though they would soon change positions) in the race to overtake the aging Crosby, who had been the consistent sweepstakes winner for more than a decade. Smart money was being laid against his chances to stay in the win spot much longer. In addition there were a dozen or more also-rans closing in behind. Now-forgotten names like Jerry Cooper, Johnny Desmond, Dick Haymes, Andy Russell, Barry Wood, Phil Brito and Phil Regan ('the singing cop') were all jockeying furiously for at least the show position. Bing managed to run on, lengths ahead, with little more than an occasional over-the-shoulder look at the rest of the pack.

Sometimes these glances took the form of sly references on his excellent Kraft Music Hall program. Those directed at Todd were, for some reason, the most numerous. One of them, in fact, became a long-running gag that even spread to other shows. Many years later Bing would reminisce about it good naturedly. "That's true, sometimes when I would hit a clinker or

Dick Todd rehearses with Glenn Miller before an early 40s broadcast

something during rehearsals, someone would yell out, 'Oh Where is Dick Todd now that we need him?" Another line found its way into the actual show, "I wonder where Dick Todd is tonight?", a question, as it turned out, with more prophecy than poetry in it.

Dick's work on 'Your Hit Parade' did nothing ti hurt the series' great popularity, while he was reaching the biggest audience of his life.

Todd married his childhood sweetheart and brought her out to Montreal to join the unexpected life of a busy entertainer. He soon tired of the rush and the noise of it and then came to resent the demands that strangers and peculiar acquaintances made - and were freely given - of her husband's time and attention. The life normal to a celebrity was a wretched existence for her and she discovered to her dismay that it would not stop simply because she married him. Their bliss was short-lived.

Todd betrayed other signs of a strong ego, not the least being his conviction that he could manage the risky business of marketing Dick Todd by himself. Seldom, unless it was forced on him, did he make use of the professional services of a business manager or even a talent agency. The consequences of this impractical approach to a million dollar enterprise manifested themselves almost as soon as he had begun to gain public attention. Without listening to wiser heads, for example, he decided when confronted with the dilemma of joining the USA armed forces or going back to Canada, to join up for the duration of the war. Up home, his talents might well have been put to the important use of morale-building. At the least he could have served his own country as a fighting man. His idea, however, was to gain United States citizenship by joining 'Uncle Sam's' fighting forces.

Quickly sent overseas to the South Pacific theatre, he served in one of the touring entertainment-units. He found the duty pleasant and the opportunity to sing for homesick soldiers an agreeable way to help win the war. Before departing, he bade farewell to his radio-producers and his bosses at RCA-Victor, suggesting to both groups they replace him with the up-and-coming Perry Como. Perry actually did take over Dick's show and he was also moved into a better position at RCA.

Until the end of the war, he did all his warbling for the troops. Though he travelled to several fighting-zones and rear-echelon areas and even occasionally touched home-base in the States, he made no effort to appear before the paying public. Others in the same situation wangled radio spots and even made records, sometimes using their military titles, the idea being to retain and continually refresh their hard-earned public image. Todd's new life was exciting and busy; he refused to concern himself with a career that had come so easily. Why should be worry over something that he could resume anytime he wanted to do so?

But in the first years of peace, he lost his rose-coloured glasses. Como had worked hard consolidating his opportunities and by now, press-agent hustle had anointed him 'King Of The Crooners' while, before that, the same clever barrage had given Sinatra his first professional nickname, 'Frankie-Boy', thereby thrilling millions of teen-age 'bobby-soxers', all hysterical and many swooning, from coast to coast. The other male vocalists were busy

Daddy's Little Girl

Words and Music by Bobby Burke and Horace Gerlach

too, appearing anywhere and anytime they found the chance.. It was the best of all times for such performers. The field had much more than doubled in five years and was more chaotic than ever. But Dick Todd, it seemed, was wanted nowhere.

He was 'strictly from hunger', to borrow a running phrase of the time. He found himself repeating his name in the places that counted to people who found it hard to remember him. Eventually he did manage to land a few club-dates while sympathetic acquaintances got him spots on radio, few of which were network. Six months or so were to fly by before he was offered a recording contract. This time it was not with the prestigious RCA but with Sonora, whose advertising budget could be more of a curse than a cure; agents took quiet note of the difference.

He clung to show-business because that was all he knew, but ironically, his earnings were to come more from the non-performing segment of the industry. To live, he took jobs as a day labourer behind the scenes, as a stagehand. For a time, he did roustabout chores with a large circus company operating out of Florida. He is still remembered by many who saw him working the curtains, arranging scene furnishings, running errands. He propped such important television sets as the famous 'Ed Sullivan Show'. He was pleased when he was at last permitted to become a regular member of the stage-hands union. Dick found a measure of content among such hardworking, sincere people. As a result, his viewpoint of life began to change, subtly at first then almost entirely. He grew more pragmatic and even worldy-wise. If he was never going to sing again for the public, he was delighted to sing for his new friends.

His cynicism was a natural reaction to his disappointment. Still his fellow workers did enjoy his music and they encouraged him to continue to try to revive his career. More than once they were instrumental in finding him engagements, but sadly, he sometimes failed to show up for the job. Then in the early 1950s, he landed a contract with Decca Records, Bing's label, and recorded a number of songs that sold moderately well. It has been said that Crosby pulled strings but that has never been verified. It is more likely that Todd made an audition record, perhaps two, and Decca was big enough to remember him and willingly offered him the new contract. It was soon discovered that much of his audience was still out there and that a new audience, younger and more vigorous purchasers, were interested too. Interestingly, despite his heavy blue-collar work, his voice remained unimpaired. Regretfully, he also retained his old singing style.

By this period, he was living on New York's Lower Eastside. His wife, Gladys, had returned to Montreal long before. Tired of his womanizing and strong rapport with the bottle, she took their small son and went home to her mother's. For some time, he made frequent visits but the atmosphere was strained; everybody was generally uncomfortable, a fact angrily recalled by his son today. Dick was optimistic; he was convinced they would get together again when he was 'back on his feet'. However, the train-trips from New York grew farther between and the letters and the little gifts slowed down. When she re-married it stunned him, hitting him harder than anything else had ever done. This bitter mood reflected itself in some of the songs he chose to record around this time. "Daddy's Little Boy", "Daddy's Little Girl", "Empty Arms" were but three of them, and he

often etched the trite lyrics with a tinge of pathos. They are considered among collectors as some of his best renditions.

His new public sometimes wondered in print whether or when he would be heard on a more consistent basis on radio. Other fans hoped he would return to films, but his way of life with its warm friends had become important to him and though he would continue to strive to build up his image as a popular vocalist, he refused to dedicate himself to the extent such a goal required. Until the end he vacillated between the two poles - occasional singing dates interspersed with his stage-hand job. To his close friends and drinking buddies, Todd was a genial pleasant man, always laughing and joking, and generous with his music anytime they asked, whether it happened to be on a set somewhere at the studios or at one of their weddings or funerals.

The Decca contract ran out in 1954 and he worked for smaller labels again, yet, thirteen years later he turned out more Deccas. By this time rock & roll was omnipresent and hillbilly music had been elevated into Country & Western, so for the first time he adjusted his vocal style to accommodate the trends. At long last he had learned the valuable lesson of flexibility. Bing, himself had enlarged his repertoire of delivery almost from the beginning, suiting the style to the song's mood; his fans had come to expect nothing less of him. Now Dick began doing the same. Over the next several months he turned out strong beat examples of 'Rockabilly' that surged with strength and verve, even when the lyrics sank into silliness.

In an interview with this writer, Todd's sister Lilian said that he was making plans to go down to Nashville and really get his career going again. It was true Nashville was an open city as far as C & W music was concerned and they welcomed 'name' stars, knowing the attention they could generate among listeners. "But you know my brother suffered badly from arthritis as he got older," she told me. "His poor legs used to swell so terribly. Sometimes they looked like barrels. Oh my! I could tell he was in a lot of pain, though he would never say much about it." During an earlier visit, he told Lillian that he had finally kicked his habit, that he had not drunk in months, but later he asked her for enough money to buy a bottle of whiskey. It so surprised and disappointed her, she refused him. That evening he went into town where his friend, Perry Como, happened to be making a personal appearance. They talked for awhile in Como's dressing room until he went onstage. Dick went back to his sister's with a fifth. "If only I had known just how terribly he needed that liquor," she remembered sadly years later, "I would gladly have given him the money."

His last visit took place sometime in 1969 when he was fifty-five. Once more his career seemed on a strong upward curve, and he was determined to maintain the impetus sparked by his last Decca Recordings. He asked her for help in investing in producing records under his own Todd label.
"I could see he was still suffering from his painful joints and muscles but his belief in himself made me proud of him. I wanted to help all I could."

He returned to New York, rented a studio, hired an orchestra and recorded three or four songs. Two were released on a 45 single: 'You're Deeper In My Heart' and 'The Night Is Young And You're So Beautiful', a pair of old and dated tunes that had failed to become hits a generation earlier.

These renditions are attractive, moving examples of the crooner's art. The voice, now prematurely aged, is rich with tonal qualities unlike anything he had done before and in true 'Dick Todd' style. But the gods who control such endeavours did not smile; very few copies were sold in that era of big-company labels and tight distribution.

Todd's life was not really very different in its essentials from the average life; it could seem that way if one left out the greater effort and the greater gains and losses, but then an average life was not what he wanted, after all. His luck, like everybody's, was a mixed bag of tricks, though perhaps the timing of its elements set him apart, among the misbegotten.

Less than two years later he was in New York's Polyclinic Hospital for arthritis and related ailments. During what is possibly his last interview to date, he seems in good spirits, the same unruffled, smiling celebrity he had always been repeating the same tired stories invented for his 'official' biography: "My folks were all from out west. . . Yes, I learned to ride a horse pretty early. . . We kids had good times back then. . ." Nothing had changed for him as far as his rapidly dwindling public was concerned. He was still the rich rancher's on from the Western Prairies. Once again he explained about the way he sang, apparently forgetting that he had actually changed it to some extent. "Yeah, that was the way I sang, you know. . .Like Bing. . ." The irony was inescapable. It made one remember when Crosby was enjoying his greatest popularity, winning a film Oscar and about to make his most successful picture. He appeared in a funny radio sketch and to the wildly laughing studio audience, said, "I'm Bing Crosby and I sound like Dick Todd." Todd always appreciated the joke.

In the last reported years, overweight, his face heavy and pink from his excesses, he still, sometimes, took the train home. "I saw him," his now-grown son told a reporter. "He was across the street from me. It surprised me to suddenly see him in town. You could tell he was looking for someone, he kept staring all around. But I couldn't help it, I simply could not bring myself to go over to him." Richard Todd, Jr.'s mother had died and he found the idea of speaking to his father, even acknowledging his existence, was more than he wanted to bear.

The final sardonic touch consisted of a shabby Freudian embellishment. Dick enjoyed playing a peculiar game of hide-and-seek, with himself as the butt of a sick gag. A fellow-worker in the stage union explained it: "Well, he would do this thing, you know, of telephoning some newspaper or radio guy and telling him that the famous singer, Dick Todd, had just died. Okay, then he pops up somewhere, maybe in one of his favourite bars, surprises everybody and laughs about how the report of his death was a little exaggerated. Yeah...Well, he didn't invent it but he sure liked to use it. I guess it was kinda funny at that". Could a certain wish have been father to that thought?

Seventy-five is painfully old for a tired, sick, discouraged drunk, reduced to living on the streets, sleeping in flop-houses, hiding from all who know him, as it has been reported. But today the 'Lost Crooner' could just as easily be in Nashville or Atlanta, happily working under another name, one that could not link him to an unpleasant past. He would probably be

portly, his wavy red hair turned somewhat grey, his voice mellower and more appealing than ever. He might be one of the many pleasant entertainers who work the supper clubs, spinning songs that soothe and lift the spirit, that speak of golden yesterdays. Lillian has said she believes that is is exactly what her brother is doing now.

This is the mystery about one of North America's popular vocalists of the recent past. Where indeed is Dick Todd? We certainly still need his kind of music because all too many like him have gone away. No one seems to know for certain exactly where he is. Any number of people will tell you they have seen him here and there around town ("I saw him but when he saw me, he ducked into a doorway". . ."He looked the other way when I came in so I didn't say anything to him". . ."Sure! The guy's around, where else would he be?") Not long ago, one of his neighbours spoke to him over national radio, "Come on home Dick, don't stay away. We all love you, you know we do." But he has not been seen in over a decade and many are not so sure anymore. Did he flip it in at last, with merciful gratitude? Or is he still struggling?

One of the rundown hotels in Manhattan where he sometimes stayed, the 'One-Two-Three', burned down in 1975. (Today this location is a fine French restaurant, the 'Un Du Trois'.) Several patrons died, burned beyond recognition where they slept. There are some, including the police, who do not believe he was there that night. Most of his cronies do not. Like Lilian, those who know him best will tell you that he is a survivor, a tough, strong guy; they know he will turn up any day now.

Maybe it will be one of his hangouts. He will walk in, look around for someone he knows, smile his big smile and announce that the reports of his death are greatly exaggerated. Then he will accept a drink and everybody will have a good laugh. . .if he isn't laughing already.

In some important and crucial respects, the Canadian Bing Crosby played a losing game all his life. His early promise and self-made opportunities led to unfortunate decisions in his career, financial matters and life-style. Unschooled and unwilling to accept advice in the wonderful but fool-tripping world of entertainment where he had chosen to be, he 'died' in the performer's definition of that term long before he became aware of it. Sadly, it was life, not death for him that was greatly exaggerated.

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NOW READ "DICK TODD - KING OF THE JUKEBOX"

Vern Taylor's excellent article provides a fine complement to Sheldon O'Connell's well-researched book "Dick Todd - King of the Jukebox" which first appeared about two years ago. (We've borrowed a couple of the pictures from the book for this article.) If you want to know the full story of Todd's life, this is the book to get.

You can still (I hope) order copies direct from Sheldon. Original price was US$7.95 + $1.00 postage but given rising costs over the last couple of years, it might be safer to write first - (or add on say $3.00 for safety!) Sheldon's address: 1675 Hornby St, #201, Sea Walk - South Tower, Vancouver, B.C. V5Z 2M3.

The Atlanta Journal AND CONSTITUTION WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 4, 1989

Hollywood's Ambassador Hotel and Cocoanut Grove Close Their Doors

By Jeff Wilson
The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — The Ambassador Hotel, where Charlie Chaplin lived, Robert F. Kennedy died, Marion Davies rode a horse through the lobby and generations of stars entertained at the Cocoanut Grove lounge, closed its doors Tuesday.

The last guests bid farewell to the 68-year-old Wilshire Boulevard landmark, an imposing building on 23 lush acres now in disrepair.

It was one of the city's first luxury hotels, its palm-lined property exemplifying the California lifestyle. Pictures of happier days line the corridors of the 350-room main building, but detracting from its elegant history now are peeling paint, worn rugs and stained wallpaper.

The Ambassador was host to top personalities in its heyday, including Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev and entertainers Elvis Presley, Elizabeth Taylor, Lena Horne, Harry Belafonte, Bing Crosby and Ray Charles.

Miss Davies rode through the hotel lobby on horseback to amuse her lover, multimillionaire publisher William Randolph Hearst. The playground for yesteryear's elite abounds with such tales.

Jack Benny proposed to Mary Livingston at the hotel, built on the site of Gottfried Schmidts's dairy farm. Marilyn Monroe modeled clothing during fashion shows, and for a half-century, newspaper columnist Walter Winchell called the Ambassador home for much of the year.

"It's going to be a landmark I will always remember. There will nver be anything like it," said Roy Gardner, 72, a retired Inglewood plumbing contractor who roamed the lobby on its last day.

Distance was calculated using the Ambassador, said Mr. Gardner. "We would say a place or somebody's house was five miles from the Ambassador, like that," he said.

But the glitz wore off the venerable hotel in the last few decades, as newer, more fashionable hotels opened downtown and on the city's Westside. The Ambassador, in the mid-Wilshire district between those areas, made few physical improvements, began losing money, and had been up for sale for three years.

In May, the owners, the J. Myer Schine family, closed about three-quarters of the 500 rooms because they failed to meet fire standards, and more than $1 million was needed for earthquake-safety improvements.

Maid Elvira Bell changed the sheets for the famous as well as the ordinary for 31 years. It was a party by "Tiny Bubbles" entertainer Don Ho, resulting in a hallway splashed with pineapple juice, that she remembers vividly.

"In those days, the music was so loud that it began to run you crazy," the 60-year-old woman said. "Now I miss it. I have dropped tears when I see those singers on TV.

"They're getting so old and I wonder, 'How about me?'"

The hotel had been a well-known landmark for years before, thanks in part to its famous Cocoanut Grove nightclub, where such stars as Sammy Davis Jr., Nat "King" Cole and Bob Hope performed.

The Ambassador dramatically came into the national limelight when New York Sen. Robert Kennedy was assassinated in the hotel pantry on June 6, 1968. He was shot to death by Sirhan Sirhan moments after declaring victory in California's Democratic presidential primary.

The site's future is uncertain, with two companies negotiating to buy it, said hotel spokeswoman Margaret Burk. The estimated sale price has risen above $100 million, with preservation of some or all of the building possibly at issue.

Fearing developers would carve up the property and sell it off for commercial and residential ventures, the City Council voted in August 1987 to declare the Ambassador a historic monument. But the declaration expired after a year without a buyer being found.

Despite its colorful history, there was no fanfare to mark its closing. Management decided against a party because people have known for two years that the hotel would be closing, Ms. Burk said.

One visitor, Betty Szeden, who first set foot in the Ambassador 30 years ago as a model in a fashion show, came back Monday with her husband.

"It was sad and quiet last night," she said. "But I'm glad to see it again."

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TRADING POST
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Starting off, three remarkable opportunities to build up your collection.

Jack Souther, 2011-44th Ave, San Francisco, Ca. 94116, USA
invites people to send him their Crosby 'wants' lists and is also happy to answer general enquiries. He writes:

"For the novice or serious collector, I have over 2000 Bing U.S. pressings (all speeds) from 7" - 16" for disposal. These include:

[10" and 12" LPs - all different]
70 x 10" LPs, 400 x 12" LPs including Decca 8272 High Tor, 5 x U.S. Coast Guard 12" LPs (Bing & Buddy Cole Trio), 14 x 12" LPs of commercial radio spot announcements.

[10" - 78rpm - all different]
500 x Decca (blue, black, red)
50 x Brunswick, Columbia and Victor,
60 albums (Decca, Brunswick, Columbia, Victor), Col. 824,
Victor 24078, Victor 24349, OK 40979, OK 41181, OK 41188, OK 41228,
Decca 18912.
6 x Paramount Radio Recordings (movie promos)
7 x vinyl test pressings (Brunswick alt. takes - not issued on 78 rpm)
2 x shellac test pressings (Deccas, not issued on 78 rpm)
20 x Decca, etc - alternate takes

[12" - 78rpm - all different]
Brunswicks: 20102, 20105, 20106, Victor 35992
52 x V discs (No 2 - 800s)
8 x movie promos

[7" - 45rpm - all different]
14 x e.p. box sets (3 - 4 discs per set)
200 x singles (Decca, Columbia, Victor, Capitol, etc)

[Others]
30 x 12" Australian Crosbyana LPs
15 x records with lyrics mentioning Bing
80 x 16" transcriptions
100 x sheet music
25 books relating to Bing, photos, etc.

Ralph Harding "Crosbyana", 67 Shirley Drive, Heolgerrig, Merthyr Tydfil, South Wales CF48 1 SE
invites offers for the following. Closing date for bids: October 31st. Postage extra, packing free. All items * feature Bing/Rhythm Boys and Bix.

1.	Don Clark Orch - I've got the girl/Idolising (rare!)	Co 824 E+/E
2.	Don Clark Orch - I've got the girl/Idolising (rare!)	Co 4310 N-
3.	Paul Whiteman - Wistful & blue/Lonely eyes	Vi 20418 E

4. Paul Whiteman - Muddy water/(Shilkret) Ain't she sweet Vi 20508 E
5. Paul Whiteman - Saxophone waltz/All depends on you Vi 20513 E
6. Paul Whiteman - Pretty lips/Side by side Vi 20627 E+
7. Paul Whiteman - I'm in love again/(Shilkret) Wherever U go Vi 20646 N-
8. Paul Whiteman - Magnolia/Love and kisses Vi 20679 E
9. Paul Whiteman - Shanghai dream man/Fallen leaf Vi 20683 E
10. Paul Whiteman - I'm coming Virginia/Just once again Vi 20751 E+
11. Paul Whiteman - My blue heaven/(Wolf Kahn) Ownsome Vi 20828 E
12. Paul Whiteman - The Calinda/(Shilkret) Vi 20882 N-
13. Paul Whiteman - Five step/It won't be long now Vi 20883 E+
14. Paul Whiteman - Ooh! maybe it's you/Shaking the blues Vi 20885 E-
15. Paul Whiteman - Missouri waltz/Beautiful Ohio Vi 20973 N-
16. Paul Whiteman - Changes*/Mary* Vi 21103 E
17. Paul Whiteman - Ol man river*/Make believe* Vi 21218 N-/E+
18. Paul Whiteman - Sunshine/Back in your own backyard Vi 21240 E+
19. Paul Whiteman - From Monday on*/Mississippi mud* Vi 21274 E
20. Paul Whiteman - March of the musketeers/Ma belle Vi 21315 E-
21. Paul Whiteman - I'm winging home/When you're with somebody* Vi 21365 E+
22. Paul Whiteman - My pet*/I'm afraid of you Vi 21389 E+
23. Paul Whiteman - Do I hear U saying (ef 5gr)/U took advant.* Vi 21398 E+
24. Paul Whiteman - It was the dawn of love*/(Goodrich Orch) Vi 21453 N-
25. Paul Whiteman - Sugar*/There ain't no sweet man* Vi 21464 E
26. Paul Whiteman - Grieving*/(Waring's Penns) Paradise Vi 21678 E+
27. Paul Whiteman - Poor butterfly/San Vi 24078 N-
28. Paul Whiteman - Ol' man river*/Make believe* Vi 25247 E
29. Paul Whiteman - Mississippi Mud*/Lonely Melody* Vi 25366 N-
30. Paul Whiteman - From Monday On*/Sugar* Vi 25367 E-
31. Paul Whiteman - Louisana*/You took advantage of me* Vi 25369 E+
32. Paul Whiteman - Changes*/(Bix Orch) Oh deep down south Vi 25370 E
33. Paul Whiteman - Mary*/(Bix) I'll be a friend with pleasure Vi 26415 E+
34. Paul Whiteman - I'm afraid of you/Lovable* (lt. scrs) Vi 27685 E
35. Paul Whiteman - Metropolis, Parts 1 & 2 12" Vi 35933 N-
36. Paul Whiteman - Metropolis, Parts 3 & 4 12" Vi 35934 N-
37. Paul Whiteman - High water/Midnight reflections 12" Vi 35992 E
38. Paul Whiteman - Muddy water/(Shilk) Ain't she sweet ViCan 20508 E+/E
39. Paul Whiteman - Lovable* (vinyl) Vi Test N-
40. Paul Whiteman - I'm afraid of you (Take 3) (vinyl) Vi Test N-
41. Paul Whiteman - My pet (Take 1) (vinyl) Vi Test N-
42. Rhythm Boys - Miss Annabelle Lee/(Aristocrats) Vi 21104 N-
43. Rhythm Boys - Miss. mud/Left sugar/Sweet Lil/Ain't Sweet Vi 20783 E+
44. Rhythm Boys - That's grandma/From Monday on Vi 27688 N-
45. Rhythm Boys - Miss. mud/Left sugar/Sweet Lil/Ain't Sweet HMV B2562 N-
46. Rhythm Boys - From Monday on/What price lyrics? HMV B2779 N-
47. Rhythm Boys - Miss. mud/Left sugar/Sweet Lil/Ain't Sweet HMV B4424 N-
48. Paul Whiteman - Saxophone Waltz/Song of the wanderer HMV B5311 N-
49. Paul Whiteman - Magnolia/(George Olson) The girl friend HMV B5317 N-
50. Paul Whiteman - Side by side/(Shilkret) 50 million French HMV B5318 N-
51. Paul Whiteman - Shanghai dream man/Fallen leaf HMV B5351 N-
52. Paul Whiteman - My blue heaven/(Wolf Kahn) Ownsome HMV B5366 E+
53. Paul Whiteman - The Calinda/(Shilkret) Baby's blue HMV B5384 N-
54. Paul Whiteman - Changes*/Mary HMV B5461 E+
55. Paul Whiteman - Ol' man river*/Make Believe* HMV B5471 E+
56. Paul Whiteman - From monday on*/Dolly dimples HMV B5492 E+
57. Paul Whiteman - I'm winging home/When yr with somebody* HMV B5497 E+

58.	Paul Whiteman - My pet/(Shilkret) Get out & get under	HMV B5504	E+
59.	Paul Whiteman - Lovable*/(Frank Masters) Bungalow dreams	HMV B5509	N-
60.	Paul Whiteman - The five step/Dancing shadows	HMV B5511	E
61.	Paul Whiteman - Ain't no sweet man/Dixie Dawn	HMV B5515	N-
62.	Paul Whiteman - Louisiana*/It was the dawn of love	HMV B5522	E+
63.	Paul Whiteman - I'm afraid of you*/Grieving	HMV B5541	N-
64.	Paul Whiteman - It won't be long now*/Manhattan Mary	HMV B5555	N-
65.	Paul Whiteman - March of the musketeers/Ma belle	HMV B5807	N-
66.	Paul Whiteman - Missouri waltz/Beautiful Ohio	HMV B5974	N-
67.	Paul Whiteman - Changes*/Louisiana*	HMV B8913	N-
68.	Paul Whiteman - Ain't no sweet man/Ol' man river	HMV B8929	N-
69.	Paul Whiteman - Make believe*/Ol' man river*	HMV BD5066	E+
70.	Paul Whiteman - High Water/Caprice futuristic	12" HMV C1607	E+
71.	Paul Whiteman - Night with Whiteman at Biltmore	12" HMV C2569	E+
72.	Paul Whiteman - Sunshine/Back in own backyard	HMV Sp AE2236	E+
73.	Paul Whiteman - Mary*/Mississippi mud*	HMV Aust EA2764	N-
74.	Paul Whiteman - Lovable*/From monday on*	HMV Aust EA3235	N-
75.	Paul Whiteman - Changes*/Louisiana*	HMV Ind N4475	N-
76.	Paul Whiteman - Mary*/Ain't no sweet man*	HMV Ind B8929	E

(Ralph Harding is numbered among England's best known Crosby collectors. Back in the 1960s, it was Ralph's excellent magazine 'The Crosby Collector' which first inspired yours truly to seriously collect Bing's records. You can read a letter from Ralph in our 'Letterbox' pages. BM)

Arnold Baker, 48 Groomsport Rd, Bangor, Co.Down, BT20 5LR, Northern Ireland is disposing of his entire collection on Crosby LPs and 45s. Arnold's list runs to 7½ closely typed pages featuring hundreds of discs which I simply don't have room to reproduce here. However, if anyone would like a photocopy of the complete list, let me know and I will forward one to you.

Among the highlights of Arnold's collection are a complete set of the Australian Crosbyana series (42 LPs) BUT, the 15 LP series Bing's Hollywood which are strongly sought after by a number of people are NOT on the list. Just thought that I'd warn you.

John Wall, 4 Hustler Court, Mount Waverley, Vic 3149
WANTS two of the Bing's Hollywood series on Festival - Cool Of the Evening and Only Forever.

IN EXCHANGE, he is prepared to offer ALL the following LPs:
Both sides of Bing Crosby, Thoroughly Modern Bing, Bing and the Dixieland Bands, Music Hall Highlights, Return to Paradise Islands, A Little Bit of Heaven, Accentuate the Positive, The Road Begins

PLUS Au$50.00!!!

Sounds like a good deal to me.

Daryl Phillips, 31 Pettil Cresc, Norlane, Geelong 3214 (phone 052 77 9229 has the following Crosby 78s to dispose of:

Neighbours in the sky/Trade winds, De camptown races/Beautiful dreamer, Laugh and call it love/I've got a pocketful of dreams, Sweet Lelani/In a little hula heaven, Alla en el rancho grande/Ida sweet as apple cider, Be honest with me/Goodbye little darlin' goodbye, The funny old hills/ I have eyes.

He also has: Deep in my heart/Serenade (Mario Lanza)
Canoe song/Love song (Paul Robeson)

Unfortunately, Daryl doesn't give the record labels or conditions, but it could be worth a phone call.

Gordon Hooper, 54 Devonport Road, Worthing, Sussex BN11 2SW, England wants excellent copies of the following Bing movies on VHS tape:

Pennies from heaven, College humour, Too much harmony, Going Hollywood, She loves me not, Mississippi, Double or nothing, Little boy lost, Top of the morning, Here is my heart.

Gordon also wants various TV shows featuring Bing.

In return, he is prepared to offer tapes of the many films in his collection. Please write for details.

Jack Higginson, 10 Holly Ave, Hollywell, Queensland 4216 is still after a number of the Bing's Hollywood discs. He will pay up to Au$35.00 per disc plus postage.

Jack requires: FL30.913, 914, 846, 916, 843, 844, 841, 916 and 947.

Albert Leonard, 27 Lovell House, Shrubland, Hackney, London E8 4NJ will prepare life-size portraits from your own favourite black and white photographs for just £9.00 - including postage to anywhere in the world. To see a sample of Albert's work, look again at the front cover of this issue of The Crosby Voice.

Postcard size originals are preferred but magazine pictures are acceptable.

Ken Henderson 349 Centre Rd, Bentleigh, Victoria 3204 (03) 557 1050) has one of the best nostalgia selections on LP (remember them?) in town and always carries a big stock of Crosby records.

Ken also has the facilities to copy videos for members, especially movies featuring Bing. Ken also has available for sale videotapes of the early movies 'Blossom Time', 'Heart's Desire' and 'Land Without Music'.

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CROSBY PROFILES

BOB ROBERTS

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Bob Roberts (left) with a very young
Bob Machliss (27) back in 1971.

In our little series of notable collectors of the music of Bing Crosby we will include anyone who has shown by his serious attitude that he is aware Bing lives, because it is up to you and me to see that he continues to do so. That is what our quest is all about. Bing Collector is our name and Collecting Bing is our game.

Sadly, far, far too many of such aficionados have slipped the mortal reins and joined Bing, but we shall not neglect them here; they too live on in our hearts.

One was a well-liked and appreciated Englishman named Bob Roberts and though, like Bing, he has been gone about ten years, he remains evergreen in memory. Roberts did not manage to meet and talk with the singer, as he always believed he would but he actually came to apprehend him quite well. They corresponded, exchanging views on a number of things. He possessed a vast fund of knowledge on him and found no trouble whatever in recalling even the most trivial incidents in Crosby's career.

Bob was one of the omnivorous types of collector, not content with records only. He picked up everything he could lay his hands on; nothing was too unimportant. Broadcasts, soundtracks of films and television, books, magazines, newspaper-clippings, scraps of print-material on boxes, toys, giveaway-items. When Frank Murphy drove through a large part of England's heartland to pick up Bob's photographs from Mrs Roberts shortly after her husband had died, he had to cram his car full in order to get them home. Bing spoke to Bob in many ways.

In the earliest days of Crosby collecting, the atmosphere was rather like a far-flung horse-trader's convention with most of us dealing as sharply as possible with one another. The writer, for example, was forced to pay an enormous sum for the time, $28.00 for one, as it turned out, badly worn copy of 'Learn to Croon' Brunswick. Roberts wrote of how several overseas collectors cheated him outrageously. One, in Chicago, stopped corresponding altogether after receiving a well-packed wooden box containing ten English Columbia Whiteman-Bings. After several tries to recover his loss, Roberts gave up, but such experiences did not destroy his faith. Instead, he grew wary and cautious. By the time I began trading with him, he made it clear on which side of the Atlantic Ocean the balance would lie. But your instincts told you that here was one of the honest, trustworthy collectors - even if he was a trifle too certain his rules would be followed or there would be no exchanges.

Bob was one of those UK traders who finally changed the climate of our little world, and for the better. He placed no swollen price on his offers and would tolerate none from others. He insisted that collectors should work together, helping one another with their respective piles of Bing material. Before the advent of tape-recording which did so much to achieve this goal, Bob was manoeuvring his distant mail-friends to work in harmony with him. He was right, of course, because today Bing's rarest music is in thousands of private libraries instead of being lost in just a few 'wheeler dealers' cupboards.

When tape-recording first became practical for home use, he was among the first to make happy use of it, probably sending out more than five hundred five-inch and seven-inch reels to all parts of the world. Bing's records ...shows...soundtracks. His rectitude helped establish many present-day standards. This writer's own shelves carry many white boxes marked with his 'BR' number. The last was 'Tie a Yellow Ribbon Round The Ole Oak Tree' (Daybreak 45). It was sent only days before his death. On the white sleeve-cover he had written "To Vernon - all best wishes, (Just released today) Bob".

While still in the late prime of life he contracted a particularly virulent, vicious form of cancer and was almost immediately made an invalid. "I was walking one day, now I am in this wheelchair." He had hurriedly to put his life in order, to arrange things for his family. Then he did what he could so as not to become too great a burden on his frightened wife. He sold all the stock and fixtures in his small shop, "Bob's Stores", had his bed brought down from the living quarters overhead as well as much of his tapes and records and recording and playback equipment.

There, with the little time left to him, he conducted his correspondence, making tapes and listening to Bing. It was impossible for faraway friends to discern any of the terrible changes that were taking place with him, though he made no great effort to hide his situation. His letters are frank and show he discouraged any strong solicitous comment; he spoke of what was happening to him with calm acceptance. Perhaps it was easier to write to distant friends than speak of it face-to-face.

His broken-hearted wife, Vera, brought him his meals, adjusted his pillows and spent hours with him, sharing Crosby's music, echoing in the large empty room, then she would go upstairs.

She wrote afterwards, "He just went to sleep, Vernon, while the music was playing." The tape unwound from the spool. "When I went down yesterday morning, the machine was still turned on."

Bob Roberts was one of the classic Crosby collectors but, of course, he was much more than that. He was a strong, courageous, caring person. He is an adornment to our wonderful pursuit of Collecting Bing.

Vernon Wesley Taylor, Portland, Oregon.

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TRADING POST EXTRA

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John Marshall, 39 Kings Road, Teddington, Middlesex TW11 0QD, UK has volunteered to take on the sad task of disposing of the late Frank Murphy's collection.

Unfortunately, there is far too much to list here (we could fill an entire magazine with the disposals offered in this issue) but The Victorian Bing Crosby Society will happily supply anyone who wants one with a photocopy.

There are around 250 12" LPs on offer, a number of boxed sets of LPs and cassettes, a few dozen EPs, over 3 dozen videos (movies and Tv specials), over 500 cassettes, at least 2 dozen CDs, a big stack of books and magazines, black and white and colour negatives of Crosby pix and a variety of memorabilia items.

John writes: "Much of the colour has gone from this little Crosbyana world of ours and just when it was most needed. I've had it said to me that "Frank loved to be noticed", just as though there was a single person on the globe who didn't. Frank at least worked for anything that turned up and in his unique, flamboyant, slightly buccaneerish way, was aware that you get little done sitting around po-faced in an armchair. He got in my hair often enough to illustrate that you either love people of this kind or you hate them. They are difficult to ignore and almost impossible to put down, hence the fact that up until the final three days, he and Sam Warner were still taking 'The Travelling Crosby Show' wherever a candle burned in a window. He knew it wasn't helping but the Frank's of this world can't seem to quite grow up and isn't it just as well for the rest of aching mankind? In there at the foundation-stone laying of British Crosby appreciation, a cassette to me just 36 hours before he died made it evident that irons were in the fire. Lots of them. RIP. Frank.

PETE MARTIN CALLS ON...

From the moment when Pete Martin, age 6, diverted a nickel destined for the Sunday school collection plate into a ticket for the movies, he believed in filmdom's stars, saw them as real people. He perfected the Hollywood interview, telling stories which, according to Nunnally Johnson, the movies' number one writer, were "some of the truest and fairest about Hollywood ever published."

Bing Crosby

In Going My Way *Bing platonically wooed nun Ingrid Bergman.*

A third nickel in my memory juke box might spring loose a disk of me reciting the story of making the movie *Going My Way* in 1944. Leo McCarey, a top director and also an old golf-course, football-game, and Del Mar Race-Track friend of mine, was always threatening to use me in one of his pictures. "I'll get an idea for you, and when I do, I'll let you know," he said. It became a running gag. Every time I saw him, even if he was three or four fairways away, I'd holler, "Now?"

He'd give a slow, negative shake of his head and yell, "No!"

That went on for years. Then one day I saw him at a football game, and when I asked "Now?" he said, "Now!"

I said, "Come over to the house."

When he came over, he told me, "After you hear the idea I have for you, maybe you'll think it isn't 'now.' I want you to play a priest."

"Now what kind of a priest could I play?" I asked. "I'd be unbelievable, and besides, the Church won't like that kind of casting."

"I think it would," he said. "I've talked to some pretty wise priests in this diocese and they think you can handle the character I described."

I said, "Let's hear it."

So he gave me the story—or, at any rate, such story fragments as he had then for *Going My Way*. It wasn't the story he eventually used, but when he was through, there wasn't a dry eye in the house—his or mine. In his preliminary takeout of his idea, I played a priest all right, but from there on it wasn't much like *Going My Way*. Looking back, I don't think he had a story at all. He just made one up as he went along. Nevertheless, he had me transfixed.

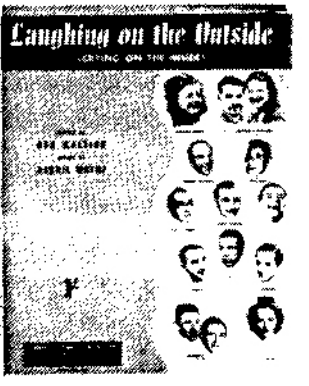
When he finished, I was sold. I said, "I'll be ready in the morning."

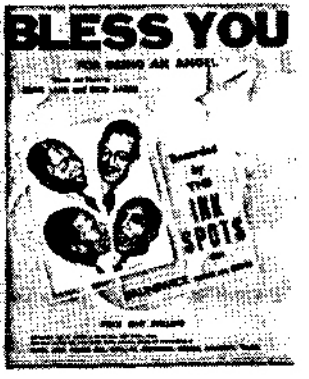
But first he had to see those good, gray elder statesmen, Paramount's top brass. Probably he told them an entirely different story, but at least it had a priest in it, for the higher-ups back East who controlled the studio's purse strings blew a gasket when they heard that I was to wear a long, black buttoned-down robe. One or two of them suggested that it might be a good idea to have Leo committed for observation.

However, Paramount's production head, Buddy De Sylva, believed in Leo. He was willing to go along with him on his Crosby-as-a-priest notion. Eventually, Buddy sold it to the people in the East. (1953)

FIRST HITS

The Book of Sheet Music 1946-1959





Introduction by Teddy Johnson

BRIAN KENSON and COLIN MORGAN

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FIRST HITS - THE BOOK OF SHEET MUSIC 1946 - 1959

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By Brian Henson and Colin Morgan. Published by Boxtree (UK) at £12.95

For the last quarter of a century or so, an obsession with record charts as a sign of a singer's popularity has ignored the bedrock contribution made by vocalists of the calibre of Bing Crosby. The 'middle of the road' listener has been left in the cold as journalists have concentrated on record chart entrants.

'First Hits' goes a long way to redress the balance because the book covers Bing's middle years. It concentrates solely on the fifteen years from 1946 to 1959 and covers eleven hundred songs which appeared in the U.K. sheet music charts during this time. This 300 page, large format paperback covers an aspect of popular music never documented in depth before - sheet music sales.

All titles are listed in chronological order and records (primarily 78s) which were issued are also identified. For instance, entry 295 is 'Sparrow In The Tree Top' which entered the chart on 7th April 1951, reached the number 5 spot and spent a total of 17 week in the top twenty. Recordings listed against this title are:

Reggie Goff with the Johnston Brothers	Released March '51
Guy Mitchell	Released March '51
Art Mooney with his Orchestra & Chorus (Alan Roster)	Released April '51
Bing Crosby and the Andrews Sisters	Released April '51
Les Baxter and his orchestra and chorus (Lindy Doherty)	Released April '51

All record labels, catalogue numbers, composer/s and music publisher/s are also supplied.

Bing is listed under 79 separate entries. 'Gigi' (January 1959) is his last mentioned - along with ten other versions.

The immediate post war years covered in the survey lead to a division into 'popular' and 'pop' music in the mid-fifties when the emergence of rock'n'roll called for a full re-appraisal of musical standards. By 1959, the 78 had all but disappeared and record charts were strongly reflecting the tastes of teenage record buyers as more and more collectors interested in 'our kind of music' took to buying long playing albums.

The authors know their stuff. Brian Henson has written about popular music for many years and Colin Morgan has gone one step further by publishing IN TUNE magazine which is devoted to the music which we regard as listenable.

Keith Parkinson

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THE EASY WAY AUSTRALIAN MEMBERS CAN PURCHASE A COPY OF 'FIRST HITS' Simply send your order to Bob Machliss, PO Box 422, South Melbourne, Victoria 3205 enclosing payment of $25.00 made out to the Society. All orders will be forwarded to Keith Parkinson in the UK. Overseas members should write direct to Keith. His address is on the inside front cover.

On the laugh line: Al Brack was so busy getting this picture of Bing Crosby and his wife Dixie Lee together, he missed the joke!

It was done very quietly because that was the way Bing wanted it, but what developed was the scoop that comes once in a lifetime!

I Was There

BY AL BRACK

THE scoop that comes once—that's what I got the night my camera caught Bing Crosby and his wife Dixie stepping out together.

Bing's murder on news pictures. Once in a while he'll let us grab a few shots. But most of the time he ducks or puts all the photogs who are around on their honor not to aim his way—so he can relax and have fun.

Because this ball, held at the Beverly Hills Hotel, was a big benefit for St. John's Hospital, the committee decided it would be better to hire just one man to take pictures. Otherwise, because the cream of Hollywood was to be there, the place would be mobbed by guys with cameras. It was my lucky day all 'round, I guess. I was the photographer they selected.

When I saw Dixie sitting beside Bing I didn't think I had a prayer. It is unusual for these two to step out together. Just the week before when they had gone night-clubbing together they'd refused absolutely to allow pictures to be taken.

But I figured I had nothing to lose by asking.

"Sure, go ahead," said Bing. "But let's not make a big fuss about it. Just wait your chance and grab them."

That's why I can't tell you why Bing's laughing his head off. I was so busy getting him and Dixie in focus I missed the joke.

Later Bing sang a series of parodies on the tunes he's done in his pictures. And his performance was so easy and smooth they wouldn't let him go. He finally had to finish with "White Christmas."

And I can tell you that Dixie, like all the rest of us, never gets tired of hearing him. She clapped as loud and long as anybody else. And when he came back and sat down beside her, she was all smiles.

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LETTERBOX
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From Graham Pascoe, Bathurst (cont. from last issue)

In his autobiography, Bing states that his second job in L.A. was with the Morrisey Music Hall Revue at the Majestic Theatre, which was re-named the Orange Grove Theatre for the occasion. Thompson's and O'Connell's books refer to the latter theatre but not to the Majestic. It seems that they are right. Intrigued by the apparent discrepancy, I contacted two local theatre buffs: John Miller, a theatre historian, and Terry Helgesen, a retired pianist and theatre enthusiast with a remarkable collection of photographs of U.S. theatres. Both stated that Morrisey's Revue would have played at a smaller theatre such as the Orange Grove, and not at the Majestic which was L.A.'s largest theatre at the time and certainly was not re-named the Orange Grove. Bing's memory must have played tricks on him. O'Connell reports that the duo moved from the Metropolitan to the Granada.

I took the opportunity to read a few biographies while I was away. A couple include references to Bing. (I find it interesting to read such incidental comments.)

Jesse L. Lasky was one of the founders of Famous Players-Lasky (with Adolph Zukor and Cecil B. DeMille), forerunner of Paramount Pictures Corporation. In Lasky's autobiography 'I Blow My Own Horn', he wrote: "Sam Katz told me there was a young fellow who had been held over in the Paramount Theatre stage show for twenty-nine weeks because the audience seemed to like him. I went downstairs and caught his act, then sent for him - but he didn't answer the summons. Instead his brother Everett came in his place to handle the sordid business details. Bing always held himself aloof from crass financial matters. I can assure you that Everett has done all right by him through the years as his fiscal mouthpiece."

James L. Collier has followed up on his excellent biography of Louis Armstrong with an equally thorough and readable account of the career of Duke Ellington. Commenting on some of the Ellington band's singers, Collier noted that Herb Jeffries joined the band in 1940, having made some reputation among blacks playing heroes in black western movies. (I had no idea that there were such movies.) So Jeffries, 'The Bronze Buckaroo' in his movie publicity releases, came into the Ellington band: "...with a high, light tenor that had been in vogue in the 1920s but that had been replaced in fashion with the more masculine baritone voices of Bing Crosby and Ray Eberle. One day backstage between shows, Jeffries was doing imitations of other popular singers for the amusement of the musicians. When he got to Bing Crosby, (Billy) Strayhorn and some of the others were instantly struck with the sound he got. "That's it," Strayhorn said. "Don't go any further. Just stay with Bing."

Collier detected a more mellow, richer and deeper vocal style by Jeffries in his subsequent recordings. Just another example of the Crosby influence, but one which I had not encountered before.

From Girvan Paterson, Seaford, Vic
Although Frank Murphy's health had not been good in recent times, he continued to produce his 'Bing Pictorial' and appear at hospitals nursing homes, etc, with his Bing Crosby Show. I'm sure that he gave great pleasure to a lot of people and gained great pleasure in return as he loved his 'Crosbyana' dearly.

From Derek Parkes, Firsdown, England
I now have a wonderful arrangement with the States and so can get U.S. discs easily and reliably. I have also opened a cheque account with the Commonwealth Bank in Australia which allows your members to purchase records through our club with the minimum of bank charges. As you know, I now produce a regular newsletter covering new releases. As production costs are quite high, it has become necessary to charge members if they wish to continue receiving copies.

From Ralph Harding, Heolgerrig, South Wales,
Although my wife Diana and I can manage reasonably well on my modest pension from the Gas Corp plus the old-age pension, I would like to be more secure financially. It is my intention to sell my Bing collection individually. I feel sad about this because, as a complete collection, it is unique, but it seems I have no choice. The enclosed list of 76 records (see Trading Post, this issue) will eventually be advertised in VJM as well. I don't suppose you know any millionaires with surplus money who want to own a unique collection that has taken almost sixty years to put together, not counting the blood, sweat and tears and dedication!

From Vern Taylor, Portland, Oregon
The BCHS Tribute #11 was a success - more Bing involvement, more music, more performers, a bigger and better show and even more delicious food! Everybody met and chatted constantly with everybody else. A number of faraway visitors made the meeting vastly interesting. Some who come to mind include Jim and Edith Draper from Canada, Bob Larsson and Milt Cummings from Connecticut, Quentin Rinehart from Glendale, Pete Caltanic from Illinois, Henry Sheety from New York, Paul and Annette Phillips from Mill Park, Victoria Australia and old friend Marion Love Massey from Los Angeles.

The evening before, most of us enjoyed drinks, tasty food and non-stop conversation at a Tacoma restaurant. Bill Osborn, the genial host/master of ceremonies made us feel very welcome. There was a pre-show auction of Crosby items including records, movie posters and still, and later, exciting Crosby quiz games with Bing memorabilia as prizes. A special friend who sang with a band in his youth brought along a couple of other professional performers and gave us a solid hour of Bing music. A dance band and an exciting girl vocalist played for the happy Crosby collectors and their wives and friends until late.

Bill Osborn presented Ken Twiss with a beautiful plaque (in blue and gold, naturally) in recognition of his singular contributions to the perpetuation of the career and music of Bing Crosby.

Ken has announced his decision to retire as President of the BCHS but he will still be nearby as advisor and promoter.

Crosby, Kelly and Sinatra:

High jinks in Newport

Take 1 girl, 2 crooners; stir musically. That's High Society.

In new musical dress with songs by Cole Porter, MGM's *High Society* transplants Philip Barry's *The Philadelphia Story* to Newport, R. I., the old-time, exclusive summer colony that is now also famous for its jazz festival. Grace Kelly, Bing Crosby and Frank Sinatra sing and cavort about in the old Katharine Hepburn-Cary Grant-James Stewart roles an unrelenting "virgin goddess" pursued by an ex-husband and an inquiring reporter. Louis (Satchmo) Armstrong adds his "zingy" personality to the uproar, and Cole Porter's frankly sentimental ballads (Satchmo's favorite: *Little One*) give the fun a white-tie dressing. With all these talents going at top speed, *High Society* (directed by Charles Walters of *Lili* fame) is engagingly romantic entertainment

Now You Has Jazz: Old friends Bing and Satchmo, at pre-wedding party, [illegible] number.

Mind If I Make Love to You?: Sinatra sings to a fascinated Grace, but she says that loving him would be "terribly inconvenient" for her.

Everybody vocalizes — including Grace

True Love: Grace and Bing in song relive the honeymoon that ended when she "dictated" what sort of man he should be

Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?: Reporters from "Spy" magazine (Celeste Holm, Frank Sinatra) eye wedding "loot" enviously, sing a sour grape song

All perplexities as to who's who in Grace's affections end when her stuffed-shirt fiancé jilts her and she happily marries Bing again

"Dig this rehearsal hall!": Satchmo arrives at Newport mansion for a wedding.

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THE QUEENSLAND BING CROSBY SOCIETY REPORT
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It's been a while since we've heard from our friends up North. Peter Traynor reports:

"We've had quite a few changes in the Committee since corresponding with you last. However the club has been battling along but quite a few of our initial members are no longer with us. Rather than recapitulate on last year's functions, I will restrict my writing to 1989 happenings.

FEBRUARY 1989
This function was held at Forest Place Retirement Village where one of our members lives. The daytime function included taped music, a video of 'That's Entertainment' together with musical items from member Lisa Taylor. The visitors from the village were most appreciative of the outing.

APRIL 1989
This combined evening with the Al Jolson Society could very well be the event of the year. We saw 'On the Avenue', excerpts from 'Holiday Inn', Al Jolson in some screen tests and film extracts from 'Go Into Your Dance. Other film clips of jazz artists and Hollywood at War made it a great night.

JUNE 1989
The Bridger's residence was the venue for the Annual General Meeting. Vic, after 5 years as President, has decided to step down from office. His initial efforts in forming the Society have been appreciated and we still hope to see him and Beryl at our functions. During the evening, we screened a video 'Remembering Bing' hosted by Dorothy Lamour. This was very well received.

AUGUST 1989
Les O'Donnell's seaside resort at Bribie Island will be the meeting place for a Bing Crosby Compact Disc night, plus a suitable video. We are all looking forward to a good night.

OUR NEW COMMITTEE FOR 1989/90
President: John Wright
Treasurer: Peter Traynor
Committee: Les O'Donnell and Jamie Kelly

That's it for now Bob.

Best wishes to yourself and all the members of the Victorian Bing Crosby Society.

Peter Traynor
74 Pampling Street,
Camp Hill 4152
Queensland.

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BING'S SERMONS
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Bing on the simple pleasures of going for a walk

"You know, it occurred to me one evening when I was driving home during the so called 'rush hour', you know - the hour when traffic is reduced to a crawl, that most of us regard life as a hundred yard dash, perpetually sprinting towards some goal or away from our troubles and perplexities. I suppose it's partly due to the fact that we're so engrossed in mastering the intricacies of our modern civilization that we forget the basic and elementary enjoyments of life around us.

What I mean to say is that we should take our foot off the accelerator of our hurried, everyday routines and slow down to an occasional walk. Now I mean this literally, since leisurely walking is a performance which can be both highly enjoyable and it can be a sedative to your frazzled nerves. You know, it's getting so that some people won't even walk the short distance from their contour chairs to the TV set to change the channel. In fact, they don't even have to lift a toe since a little anti-ambulatory attachment makes it possible to switch the program by remote control.

About the only time you see a person walking in Los Angeles it seems like is when some motorist runs out of gas and has to hike it to the nearest filling station. Many people, and I suppose I should include myself are wary, and they shy away from exercise in it's more violent forms. However, I am a firm believer and an active disciple of the art of strolling for pleasure. Yes I am, honestly.

Now according to some of our great naturalists and philosophers such as Wordsworth, Longfellow, Tuckerman and Thoreau, walking is an art. And since each art has its technique, there are certain things which should be considered. One important rule is that a walk should never have an objective or any definite direction. You just start out - you go for a walk, not going anywhere. You know, it takes two to tango; a walk of course can be better enjoyed alone, unless of course it's Spring and (chuckle) you're walking your baby back home. That's that moonlight walking.

The British, who as you know are inveterate walkers and therefore experts on the subject, believe that a walk should never be a premeditated ritual. It's as simple as just dropping the lawnmower handle, tossing your dishtowel over your shoulder, laying aside your income tax form and passing through the front door into the out-of-doors. But if you start out and carry your worries with you, why you might as well turn round and go back to whatever you were worrying about. You might as well do your walking indoors, just pace the floor for a while. That's good exercise I suppose for the leg muscles but certainly not good for one's piece of mind.

Taking a stroll can just be a wonderful way to regain and recapture all those things which in our everyday lives we never have time to see or experience. You won't have to seek these things out, they're all around you. You'll find them in many shapes, sounds, colours, smells. Things like cloud formations, turning leaves, the birds in flight, reflections in

the water, the aroma and texture of growing things. Well if there's a wood handy, get out into it. You might have the opportunity to see if you can outguess a fox squirrel as he tries to keep the trunk of a high hickory between you and himself. 'Course you ain't going to win, but you've had some laughs. And you might look through a thicket of flowering dogwood and you might see a deer. Or the deer might look through the thicket and see you.

Out in the country, you'll find that nature isn't so backward when it comes to wide-angled screen and technicolor. You won't find a popcorn stand in a hollow tree but at the right time of year, there might be a vine of wild grapes, some blueberry bushes or a butternut tree, some thimbleberries or huckleberries - handy for the hungry walker.

I guess that most of us keep our ears shut, I imagine in self protection, against the sound and the fury of daily commerce and the mechanical age filled with telephones, traffic noises, and oh, just general bedlam. But when you take a walk, your auditory apparatus will open up and be attentive to happier sounds around you. The rumbling of distant thunder instead of a two-tone truck; the chattering of birds instead of a typewriter; and the sound of a bubbling brook. It isn't going to annoy you like a dripping fawcett.

Oh the world is wonderful, once we get out into it for a stroll and have an uninterrupted opportunity to look at it and smell it and get lost in it for a few minutes. Of course mailmen, foot soldiers and policeman who must walk a beat day in and day out who might be listening to this - they're going to think I'm clean off my rocker, but I still say it's wonderful taking a walk.

(As spoken by Bing on his broadcast of March 24th, 1955)

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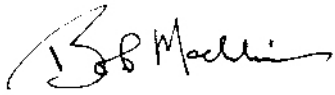
And that's where we'll leave this edition of the Crosby Voice. I seem to have this sudden urge to lay aside my word processor and go for a stroll in the great outdoors. Hope that you enjoyed the reading. See you next time.



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BACK PAGE SPECIAL

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BLUEY AND CURLEY